

WORDS, IMAGERY, AND THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

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VOLUME LV



WORDS, IMAGERY, AND THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

A RECONSTRUCTION OF CYRIL
OF ALEXANDRIA'S CHRISTOLOGY

BY

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To Ginger, Lachlan, and Blakely

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Steven Alan McKinion
Wake Forest, North Carolina
27 Juni 2000
Feast Day of St Cyril of Alexandria

ABBREVIATIONS

ACO	Schwartz, <i>Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum</i>
JECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JEH	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
L	Lietzmann, <i>Apollinaris von Laodicea und seine Schule</i>
Loofs	Loofs, <i>Nestoriana</i>
MSR	<i>Mélanges de Science Religieuse</i>
PG	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
PGL	<i>Patristic Greek Lexicon</i>
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i>
RHE	<i>Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique</i>
RSR	<i>Recherches de Science Religieuse</i>
SJT	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
StudPat	<i>Studia Patristica</i>
TheoStud	<i>Theological Studies</i>
TRE	<i>Theologische Realenzyclopadie</i>
W	Wickham, <i>Select Letters</i>

INTRODUCTION

Even a cursory reading of the volumes left by Cyril of Alexandria reveals the perennial presence of christological images, word pictures that are found throughout his many attempts to express his understanding of an orthodox picture of Christ. This work is concerned with those images. There is no study dedicated to the task of a re-reading of Cyril's christology through his plethora of analogies.¹ The present work seeks to achieve such a re-reading. Two glaring questions face us in our effort to read Cyril's christological imagery. First, what part do images play in his christology? It is important for interpreters to discover how important his analogies are to the expression of his picture of Christ. It is this foundation which will allow for a more accurate reading of his christology. Second, what christological content can be extracted from these images? Only by placing these analogies in their proper christological contexts will we be able to find in them any message about Cyril's conception of the person of Christ. These two questions have determined the process and structure of this work.

The volume is divided into three parts. Part One is concerned with the contexts of Cyril and his christological images. An introductory chapter addresses his life and ministry. Items include his influences, his writings, and the debates in which he continually found himself. A knowledge of these matters helps in understanding the formulation and development of his use of imagery. Chapters Two and Three examine the images in their scriptural and philosophical contexts, respectively. In other words, the analogies in question find their beginnings in either the biblical record or the scientific discussions of the philosophers. The first of these two chapters questions Cyril's understanding and use of images from the Bible, particularly the Old Testament. The second examines how natural phenomena are employed

¹ Notable instances in which scholars have sought to address the question of Cyril's christological imagery include H.A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956); J.A. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy* (Leiden, 1994); and R.A. Norris, 'Christological Models in Cyril of Alexandria', *StudPat* 13 (1975), 254-268. Cyril is a central figure in F.R. Gahbauer, *Das anthropologische Modell. Ein Beitrag zur Christologie der Kirche bis Chalkedon* (Würzburg, 1984). None of these works grant Cyril's images a central role in his christological expression.

as analogies in Cyril's christological expression. The intention is ultimately to determine the extent to which images are helpful to Cyril in articulating his picture of Christ, and in turn how they are helpful to our task of understanding that picture.

The second part examines Cyril's rejection of two important heresies: Nestorianism and Apollinarianism. Chapter Four investigates what he believes Nestorianism to be, and why it is abhorrent to him. This heresy is the focus of his ire and polemical assault from 428 until the end of his life. The fifth chapter addresses the charge of Apollinarianism levelled against Cyril, particularly what he perceived the accusation to be, the arguments he employs to reject it, and why it is inconsistent with his own christology. By seeing what Cyril rejects and why he rejects it, we are more prepared to read his christology more accurately.

The final part is comprised of three chapters, and is a reconstruction of Cyril's picture of the *mysterium Christi* by means of a reading of his christological images. Chapter Six describes Cyril's use of analogies to illustrate that Christ is fully God. The next chapter describes his use of images to illustrate that Christ is fully human. With this dual confession comes the dilemma of explaining how this one individual could be both *vere Deus* and *vere homo*. Chapter Eight seeks to draw together Cyril's imagery and reconstruct his picture of Christ, thus offering his understanding of the solution to the christological paradox.

With regard to the question of the importance of images to Cyril's christology, one will discover that although he perceives them to be illustrative of his christological formulae and declarations, he nevertheless utilises them in a strategic manner, clarifying what he states about the person of Christ. A similar conclusion has been reached by Norris, in an article in which he questions the validity of the popular practise of categorising Patristic writers as either Logos-flesh or Logos-man. He suggests that at least in the case of Cyril of Alexandria the evidence demands "a reconsideration or modification of the typology itself".² For Norris, the Logos-flesh model is simply inadequate to describe Cyril's christology. In fact, the tendency to label every christology as either Logos-flesh or Logos-man has, in Norris's estimation, led to the characterisation of Cyril's christology as a "concealed Apollinarianism". It fails to recognise, Norris maintains, that Cyril has two "ways of talking" about the Incarnation. The first of these ways is his constant and frequent recital of traditional, orthodox

² Norris, 'Christological Models', 256.

statements of faith. In numerous places Cyril either quotes or paraphrases passages of Scripture, the Nicene Creed, and statements from other Fathers. As Norris notices, Cyril takes pride in his recital of this christological vocabulary, and appeals to the authority of his sources often. From these sources Cyril extracts his expressions such as the Word “becoming man”, “becoming enfleshed”, and others. From here he develops his kenotic theme. Norris concludes that in this instance, Cyril christology is not an attempt to understand the relation of the Word to flesh or to man, but “a series of attempts to make explicit the implications of a subject-attribute model for understanding what is involved in the self-emptying of the Word”.³ There is no originality on the part of Cyril here, but he never intended there to be. It was precisely in the *unoriginal* character of his christology that he saw to be its strength: it was the christology of Scripture and the Fathers.

Norris finds a second “way of talking” by Cyril. This he calls Cyril’s composition language, where Christ is the result of putting two things together. It is at this level that the Logos-flesh and Logos-man models find their supposed appropriateness. In other words, where Cyril ventures to describe the Person of Christ in terms of the union of the Word and flesh with a rational soul, he begins to address the relation between the Word and the flesh. Norris finds Cyril to be reluctant to speak in this way, and subordinates it to his “narrative language” about the Word becoming a human being. There is inconsistency in Cyril’s use of composition language depending on whether he is in his anti-Nestorian or anti-Apollinarian mood. It is at this stage that Norris finds Cyril’s analogies to be helpful, though not crucial to the argument. Norris interprets Cyril to be guided in his thinking by “a pattern of christological predication and not a physical model”.⁴ This means that his physical analogies, such as the body-soul image, are not intended to demonstrate the composition of Christ, but to illustrate that the Logos is the one single agent of the Incarnation. Consequently, for Norris, Cyril’s physical images are not explanations, but “merely pointers to the truth intimated in the sound form of christological words”.⁵

Norris’ article does not attempt to reconstruct Cyril’s christology, and his conclusion is reached almost as an afterthought. His concern is with “ways of talking”, which, of course, included imagery. There

³ *Ibid.*, 261.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 267.

⁵ *Ibid.*

is, however, no investigation into the extent to which particular images contain or express Cyril's christology. Furthermore, Norris does not seek to place Cyril's analogies in their respective contexts; it is not his intention to do so. We intend not only to say something about Cyril's use of imagery, but also what it tells us about his christology.

With regard to the question of Cyril's christology one will see that a re-reading of Cyril in the light of his images reveals a coherent picture of Christ, and one in which the label 'unification christology' is entirely inappropriate. From the evidence provided, one can conclude that scholars should reject the notion that Cyril's christology is a medium between Nestorianism and Apollinarianism, and that it is an attempt to unify two pre-existent things. On the contrary, the Alexandrian's theology is an attempt to understanding how one can conceive of a particular individual as both fully God and fully human. Cyril's use of images, it will be argued, helps one to understand his conception of the *mysterium Christi*.

PART ONE

THE CONTEXT OF CYRIL'S IMAGERY

CHAPTER ONE

IMAGES IN THE CONTEXT OF
CYRIL'S LIFE AND WORK

There is a great deal more that could be said about the Archbishop of Alexandria, but a synopsis of his life and work is indispensable to contextualising his imagery. What we hope the reader will gain from the chapter is a realisation that Cyril's work did not occur within a vacuum. He did not retreat to a proverbial ivory tower in order to ponder the mysteries of the Christian faith. His thought was formulated in the crucible of at least two controversies, and it was influenced greatly by a deep devotion to the Holy Scriptures and an exceptional theological pedigree. In addition, Cyril was keen to use the language of the day, developing it into a vocabulary useful in professing orthodox theology. One must understand a bit more the context within which Cyril lived and wrote in order to understand more fully his christology.

Cyril of Alexandria

When Theophilus, the controversial Archbishop of Alexandria, died on Tuesday, 15 October 412, the choice of his successor marked a watershed in Church history, particularly in terms of the development of the Church's christological understanding and terminology. The son of Theophilus' sister ascended to the throne, chosen against the wishes of the government, which supported the archdeacon Timothy for the position. Cyril was consecrated Bishop of Alexandria three days after Theophilus' death. There the young Cyril began an international ministry which lasted for another thirty-two years, during which he defended the orthodox Nicene faith he had received from his uncle and the other great Alexandrian fathers who preceded him on the throne of St. Mark. Whether denouncing the Arians for denying the complete divinity of the Word of God, or anathematising the Nestorians for severing Christ into two individuals, Cyril was in a constant battle for the heart and soul of orthodoxy as he interpreted it in Scripture and the Fathers who preceded him. Still today the legacy of this great man—however one might view his politics or theology—lives on in churches of all persuasions. Regarding christological development, Cyril's importance is articulated best by

Wickham: "The patristic understanding of the Incarnation owes more to Cyril of Alexandria than to any other individual theologian.... All subsequent christology has proceeded, and must proceed, by way of interpretation of [his] picture [of Christ]".¹ Through the means of the Nestorian Controversy, the Council of Ephesus, and the Council of Chalcedon, if it can be seen as the consequence of the concord between Cyril and the Orientals, Cyril's christology carried further the orthodoxy of Nicaea, and helped the Church develop the vocabulary necessary to articulate the *mysterium Christi*.

Little is known of Cyril's life prior to his ascension to the See in 412. The bishop and historian John of Nikiou reports that Cyril was born around 378 in Theodosios.² He was ordained Reader in the Alexandrian church by Theophilus in 403, and there began his formal ministry. In that same year Cyril accompanied his uncle to the Synod of the Oak, where John Chrysostom was deposed.³ The event made such an impression on the young man that it was not until 417 that Cyril had John's name restored to the diptychs in Alexandria, if at all.⁴ Much of Cyril's early life was probably spent in formal education, perhaps at the Philosophical-Catechetical school in Alexandria.⁵ He would have had a thorough and comprehensive education, probably being trained in ῥητορική, γραμματική and, of course, biblical studies. Cyril knew some Latin, perhaps to make use of Latin commentaries or to correspond with Rome, a skill which proved beneficial in the controversy with Nestorius, as Nestorius' correspondence was left untranslated, and therefore often unread.

Besides his controversies with the Arians and Nestorians, there were other groups with whom Cyril had disagreement: for example, he confiscated Novatian churches in Alexandria early in his reign. Outwith the Church, the Jewish community was long at odds with

¹ *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters* (Oxford, 1983), xi. Likewise, J.A. McGuckin says that next to Athanasius, Cyril 'has had the greatest impact on the articulation of this most central and seminal aspect of Christian doctrine', see *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, 1.

² *The Chronicle of John Bishop of Nikiou*, ed. and trans. R.H. Charles (London, 1916), 76. For additional information about the life of Cyril see McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 2ff, and F.M Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon* (London, 1983), 242-246.

³ See *Ep.* 33 (ACO 1.1.7:148.^{30ff}, PG 77:159C).

⁴ There is no reason to assume that Cyril in fact did restore John's name. Although he did contrast the heterodoxy of Nestorius with the orthodoxy of John, one must remember that John's deposition was on disciplinary and not doctrinal grounds. Cf. *Ep.* 33 (ACO 1.1.7:148.^{30ff}, PG 77:159C). It is noteworthy to recall that Cyril cited John in his *Oratio ad Dominas* (ACO 1.1.5:67.^{14ff}, PG 76:1216A). Cf. McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 5.

⁵ See McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 4.

the Christians in Alexandria, and the new patriarch brought no changes with him to office. Violent clashes between the groups took place in the city, and on one occasion the death of a number of Christians resulted.⁶ A gang of Jews sounded the alarm, claiming that the church was burning. When the Christians rushed to save the building, they were ambushed. Although Socrates reports that Cyril expelled the Jews after this event, it is likely that the story is embellished. Probably Cyril sought their expulsion, with some being banished.⁷ In addition, he was in almost constant disagreement with Orestes, the city Prefect, and openly opposed the pagans in the city. In opposition to the cult of Isis, Cyril had the relics of the martyred Saints Cyrus and John taken to Menouthis. Socrates implicates Cyril in the brutal murder of the Neoplatonic philosopher Hypatia by a group of Christians. However, the evidence neither indicts nor exonerates Cyril in the matter.⁸

His tone in writing to and about these groups, especially the Nestorians, is interesting to note, albeit briefly. Young contends that Cyril was consumed with his mission to the point that he was blinded to "the doubtful morality of the means whereby his ends were achieved".⁹ Cyril's mission was the establishment of the Christian faith, and he was willing, Young maintains, to use positive, even violent action to accomplish this mission. What does the internal evidence of the tone of his writings tell us? In both his *Second* and, interestingly enough, *Third* letters to Nestorius, Cyril refers to Nestorius as "his most pious and divinely favoured minister" and "your Reverence".¹⁰ This, of course, could be mere common courtesy as Cyril was writing to another bishop, in particular the bishop of Constantinople. However, Cyril wrote elsewhere, "I am filled with love for Nestorius; nobody loves him more than I do".¹¹ There is no reason to think Cyril insincere. As one reads especially the early correspondence with Nestorius, one perceives that Cyril's interest is two-fold: the unity of the Church, and its doctrinal purity. His interest is in doctrine rather than character assassination. For that reason, Cyril tends to attack the theology rather than the theologian. In *Adversus Nestorium* the tone changes a bit, with Cyril's language being more

⁶ Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.*, 7.15.

⁷ Cf. R.L. Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind* (New Haven, 1971), 54-58.

⁸ Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.*, 7.7; 7.13. McGuckin cites these passages: *The Christological Controversy*, 7.

⁹ Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*, 244.

¹⁰ *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:23.²⁵⁻²⁶, PG 77:40A); *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1: 33.⁴⁻⁵, PG 77:105A).

¹¹ *Ep.* 9 (PG 77:61D).

confrontational. This can perhaps be explained by Nestorius' refusal to recant, and thus his becoming a danger to the Church, at least in Cyril's perception. Still, the tone is not that of a ruthless politician seeking to destroy the character of an innocent participant, but a church-man concerned with the health and well-being of the Church. But how does this fit with the reports from men such as Socrates who brand Cyril a brutal man? There appears to be need for further research into Cyril's treatment of his opponents¹²—it could possibly be that Cyril's attitude toward those within the church, who are at least on common ground with Cyril, are viewed in a different way from those who are seen as an affront to the gospel and enemies of the Church. For example, at the end of his career he refused to join the chorus of those condemning Theodore of Mopsuestia, and he even calls upon the writings of John Chrysostom to help argue his point.¹³ If this is the case, it could help explain why mobs of Alexandrian Christians were prone to violence against those outwith the Church, but less so against those within the Church. In addition, it would stand to reason that Cyril's tone against Nestorius would become less cordial and less conciliatory as the controversy progresses: the longer Nestorius persists in his refusal to recant, and instead continues to propagate his supposed heresy, the more dangerous he becomes to the Church. Cyril would recognise this, and his attitude toward Nestorius would become more like his attitude toward enemies of the Church, rather than misled factions within it. We see something to account for this when Cyril asks, "If we have been commanded by Christ to love even our enemies, how much more does it follow that we should do the same to our brothers and especially fellow priests?"¹⁴ Perhaps the evidence does not provide enough information to draw even the most fundamental conclusion that Cyril's attitude was different towards those within and those outwith the Church, but it does call for a reconsideration of Cyril's treatment of the Nestorians, and his other opponents.

Cyril's ministry began where Athanasius' had left off—topically, that is, and not chronologically—battling against the Arians. Having begun in Alexandria, Arianism had plagued the fourth-century

¹² It is of benefit here to see Wilken's *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*, where he explores the relationship between Cyril and the Jews. Although Wilken's intention is to show how this affected his exegesis, it could be a starting point for more work into how Cyril treated his opponents.

¹³ *Oratio ad Dominas* (ACO 1.1.5:67.^{14ff.}, PG 76:1216A).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

church there.¹⁵ The ruling at Nicaea had not killed the heresy for good, and Cyril followed Didymus and Theophilus in a marked determination to rid the region of this disease. His earliest works, e.g. *Thesaurus* and *Dialogues with Palladius*, were concerned almost exclusively with the Arian threat. The Arians were also the foes in Cyril's *Commentary on the Gospel of John* and various other early works.

In 428 another opponent emerges. No longer is Cyril fighting only against the disease of Arianism, but now he must fight heresy from the East. A collection of sermons from the new archbishop of Constantinople sparked this new debate, this one with the Antiochenes, that led Cyril and the Church into a controversy which continues even until now. Cyril now fought on two fronts: against the Arian denial that the Logos made man was fully God, and against Antiochene dualistic christology, which Cyril interpreted as going back to the two-Sons doctrine of Diodore of Tarsus. It was the latter of the two which eventually consumed the remainder of Cyril's life and work.¹⁶

One must remember that the respective christologies of both the Alexandrians and the Antiochenes had developed in response to Arianism, a common enemy. The two solutions, however, were disjoined and incongruous. The Alexandrians defended the deity of Christ through a theory of *kenosis*, whereby God the Word descended to the level of humanity by truly becoming man. Emphasis was placed on the work of the Logos, and the unity of the Person of Christ was of primary importance: Jesus Christ was fully divine because he was God become man. The Antiochenes, on the other hand, defended the divinity of Christ from the starting point of the historical Jesus, whose life is recorded in the gospels. The Arians had searched the gospels looking for references to Christ's suffering, weeping, feeling pain, maturing, etc., in order to demonstrate that he could not be fully God, as God is beyond the reach of these experiences. In response, the Antiochenes placed emphasis on the two natures in Christ, arguing that the "human" things took place in and through the human nature, and the "divine" things through the divine nature. We will examine this dichotomy with relation to Cyril in a subsequent chapter.

¹⁵ For a more detailed investigation of Arius and Arianism see Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*.

¹⁶ However, as the writing of Cyril's massive *Adversus Julianum* demonstrates, Cyril was concerned with the pagan threat even later in his ministry.

The Council of Ephesus

Controversy between writers in the two regions initially began when Apollinarius sought to answer the Arian threat with a radical doctrine of the Incarnation of the Logos. His solution was to explain the incarnation as the Word replacing the rational mind of man, thus becoming the guiding principle in Christ. This image of an “incomplete man” was rejected, of course, by both the Alexandrians and the Antiochenes. But the event left the Antiochenes with suspicions of any Alexandrian christology which sounded the slightest bit like that of Apollinarius. It seems that any christological picture which came out of Alexandria was subjected to the test of Apollinarianism, and was perhaps, therefore, tainted from the start.

The Antiochene solution, in turn, presented problems for the Alexandrians. As Apollinarius had corrupted the orthodox Alexandrian picture of Christ, Diodore did the same for the Antiochene picture. The Alexandrians began interpreting Antiochene christology in the light of Diodore’s dreaded two-Sons doctrine, which, whether intentionally or not, painted a picture of Christ in which the Son of God joined to himself a man, Jesus, who then was the Son of God as a result of this assumption. This hit right at the heart of Alexandrian soteriology, which demanded that Christ be God made man. Dualistic christology, as preached by Diodore, was as unacceptable as the corrupted christology of Apollinarius. With both schools interpreting the other in the light of these heresies, the Eastern Church was an environment ripe for controversy when Nestorius ascended the throne of Constantinople in 428, some sixteen years after Cyril’s rise to the throne of St. Mark.

Not long after taking office, this young, well-spoken bishop began preaching highly controversial sermons, questioning some of the basic tenets of the Church’s dogma. When a collection of Nestorius’ sermons was circulated, it found its way to Cyril in Alexandria. In these messages Nestorius denied the validity of the appellation of Θεοτόκος for Mary, the Mother of Jesus, opting instead for Χριστότοκος. This prompted Cyril to act. In both his paschal letter of 429¹⁷ and a letter to the monks in Egypt¹⁸ in the same year, Cyril denounced those who would abandon Θεοτόκος. For Cyril, denying that Mary was the Mother of God amounted to denying that Christ was God made man. Cyril had been prepared for this battle by his prior polemic

¹⁷ *Hom. Pasch.* 17 (PG 77:768A-789A).

¹⁸ *Ep.* 1.

against the Arians, whose christology led to the same conclusion: Christ was perceived to be less than fully God. Armed with the christological foundation of Athanasius and his Alexandrian pedigree, Cyril confronted Nestorius directly in a series of letters to the bishop.

After no common ground could be reached between Cyril and Nestorius—the “common ground” actually amounted to Cyril’s call for Nestorius to recant—both men appealed to Rome. Pope Celestine I called a synod in Rome to be held in 430. At the synod Nestorianism was condemned, and a letter dispatched to Nestorius with news of the decision. To the letter Cyril attached twelve anathemas. Nestorius was instructed to approve the anathemas or face excommunication. Nestorius refused, and appealed to Emperor Theodosius II, who in turn called a general council for Pentecost 431 in Ephesus.¹⁹ Cyril and his contingent arrived in Ephesus and convened the council, without the Oriental delegation. As Grillmeier has noted, the Council was not concerned with developing new vocabulary, or even clarifying existing language, for articulating the Church’s christology. Instead, its primary objective was to affirm the content of orthodox belief about the Incarnation, and to address christological content which did not conform to orthodoxy.²⁰ One important development that did take place, however, was the conciliar acceptance of Nicaea as the standard of orthodoxy. From this point on, all christology would be contrasted with the Nicene formula to determine orthodoxy. At Ephesus this took place by reading the statement from Nicaea for the participants, then reading any works in question. The works would be compared with the orthodox formula, and those conforming to the statement would be accepted, those not conforming to it rejected. Cyril’s *Second Letter to Nestorius* was read and affirmed to be orthodox as an expression of the faith of Nicaea. Nestorius’ reply to that letter was rejected, and Nestorius was condemned as a heretic. John of Antioch arrived with the Oriental delegation, convened another council, and deposed Cyril. Outraged by the debacle, Theodosius deposed Cyril, Nestorius, and Memnon bishop of Ephesus, and had them kept under arrest. After their release from custody, Cyril returned to Alexandria a hero, and Nestorius retired to a monastery in Antioch. The proceedings of the council, however, ended up providing a foundation for the eventual reconciliation between Cyril and his Antiochene opponents.

¹⁹ Subsequently known as the Third Ecumenical Council of the Church. McGuckin provides a detailed discussion of the events surrounding the Council of Ephesus in his chapter, ‘The Context of the Ephesus Crisis’, 53-125.

²⁰ A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol 1 (Atlanta, 1975), 484-5.

It was not until 433 that an accord was reached between Cyril and the Orientals. The Formulary of Reunion²¹, which both parties signed, approved Nestorius' condemnation for heresy, tempered the twelve anathemas, and rejected dualistic christology. The problem for the Cyrillian side was found in the "two natures" language of the formulary. Cyril, however, interpreted this as a distinction, rather than a separation, and approved the document as orthodox. This did not satisfy the monophysite party, and the Council of Chalcedon (451) eventually became necessary. Cyril had always claimed to desire unity within the Church, but never at the expense of orthodoxy.²² The Formulary stands as a lasting testimony to Cyril's awareness that technical language is subservient to the theology it seeks to articulate. The concern was for proper doctrine, not a particular description thereof, *per se*.²³ Even on his deathbed Cyril refused to condemn his old adversary Theodore of Mopsuestia, once again demonstrating the higher need for proper theology rather than proper language alone.

The controversial life of Cyril of Alexandria ended on 27 June 444, in Alexandria. He had spent his entire ministerial life fighting for orthodoxy against the heretic and the infidel. Regardless of the judgement history has rendered, or will render, one thing is certain: Cyril was most concerned with the one theme of the Person and work of Christ, the Lord and Saviour. Indeed, Cyril's ministry and theology, indivisible for him, are best described as *Christocentric*. Although Cyril's death was the end of his long ministry to the Church, his legacy remained, and the controversy of which he was so integral a part, continued for long after 444, culminating in Chalcedon.²⁴

Cyril's Writing Career

Much of Cyril's ministry was dedicated to writing. He produced a great amount of material, including commentaries, letters, sermons,

²¹ See Grillmeier, 497-500. For the Formulary of Reunion, see ACO 1.1.4:17.^{9ff.}, PG 77:177A.

²² 'I call on you as my brother and entreat you before Christ and the elect angels to join us in holding and teaching [sound doctrine], so that the peace of the churches may be preserved and God's priests may have an abiding bond of unbroken love and harmony', *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:28.²²⁻²⁵; PG 77:49A), Wickham's translation. There is no reason to doubt Cyril's sincerity.

²³ We will be addressing this theme throughout the course of this book.

²⁴ A more detailed description of theological development and discussion between Cyril's death and the Council of Chalcedon, and subsequent to Chalcedon can be found in Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*; Grillmeier, vols. 1 and 2.2; and I.R. Torrance, *Christology after Chalcedon* (Norwich, 1988).

treatises, and other dogmatic-polemical writings. The extant complete works and fragments fill ten volumes of Migne's *Patrologia Graeca* (68-77).²⁵ While Cyril was living many of his works were translated into Latin, especially his correspondence with the Roman Church. In addition, there have been Syriac, Armenian, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions of many writings. Cyril's literary activity is divided by the Nestorian Controversy into two periods: ante-428, in which his works were primarily exegetical with the Arians as the opponent; and post-428, in which Cyril is concerned with the Nestorian heresy and a description of the Incarnate Christ. The exegetical material Cyril produced is greater in volume than any other genre, and McGuckin has posited that Cyril would probably have been convinced that his commentaries would be his greatest feat.²⁶

Cyril composed commentaries on the Old Testament books of Isaiah, two on the Pentateuch, the Minor Prophets collectively, Kings, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Songs, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Most well-known would be two commentaries on the Pentateuch: *De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate* and *Glaphyra*. The former is comprised of seventeen books, and is in the form of a dialogue between Cyril and Palladius. The latter differs from the former in that it follows the order of the biblical books and is not in the form of a dialogue. The masterpiece of Cyril's New Testament commentaries is one on the Gospel of John, written before the Nestorian Controversy. Other New Testament works include a collection of homilies on Luke, and commentaries on Matthew, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Hebrews.

Prior to the Nestorian Controversy, Cyril waged war against the Arian heresy.²⁷ Two large works contain his attack on the Arians, *Thesaurus de sancta et consubstantiali Trinitate* and *De sancta et consubstantiali Trinitate*. These two works are similar to the Athanasian anti-Arian polemic. The controversy with Nestorius began with two of Cyril's writings, his *Paschal Letter* of 429 and his *Letter to the Egyptian Monks*, which Young believes was written to consolidate his alliance with the monks, traditional "shock-troops" of the Alexandrian fathers.²⁸ Cyril's anti-Nestorian polemic is best characterised by his five volumes *Adversus Nestorii blasphemias*, and his *Second* and *Third Letters to*

²⁵ For a full listing and description of Cyril's works, see J. Quasten, *Patrology* (Maryland, 1963), 116-142.

²⁶ McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 4.

²⁷ For a study of the Arian Controversy, see R.P.C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God* (Edinburgh, 1988).

²⁸ Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon*, 214.

Nestorius, the latter being accompanied by the famous (or infamous?) *Twelve Anathemas*. There is a great deal of other correspondence from Cyril which enlightens us about his christology and ministry. During this period Cyril produced three works for the Emperor and his sisters entitled *De recta fide*, and his *Apologeticus ad Imperatorem*, written after the Council of Ephesus, defended his actions at the council. *Contra Diodore et Theodore* and *Contra Synousiastas* are polemics against the teachers of Nestorius and the Synousiasts respectively. His two greatest christological works are *Scholia de incarnatione Unigeniti* and *Quod unus sit Christus*, which was probably his last anti-Nestorian work. A large volume written to refute Julian the Apostate's *Against the Galilaeans* was Cyril's *Contra Julianum*. The primary theme of Cyril's writings is the Person of Christ. Regardless of the front on which he was fighting, the topic seemed always to be the *mysterium Christi*, and how it is rightly to be understood.

Influences on Cyril

In this section I want to introduce the sources of Cyril's christological thought and/or expression, stating briefly the three most prevalent influences on the thought and writings of the patriarch. In addition, the following chapters on the use of images from Scripture and philosophy will contain further evidence of how influential each was in Cyril's christology.

The least influential of these is philosophy. Although there has been much debate on the influence philosophy had on Cyril, there is far from a consensus. Wickham says that Cyril had little desire to know "science, history, philosophy, and other secular pursuits," and although he did read Plato, Homer, and other philosophers, his purpose was more for form than for content.²⁹ Many scholars join Wickham in discounting Cyril's use of philosophy and science as shallow and non-technical. Others have gone further, arguing that Cyril had almost no serious knowledge of or interest in the philosophers. But is this the case? Siddals has shown quite convincingly that Cyril was not only aware of philosophical ideas, but used them extensively in his theological predication. Her conclusion is that Cyril has a "firm grasp of key logical concepts", and "has absorbed the principles of elementary logic".³⁰ In addition, both Siddals and Grant have

²⁹ Wickham, *Select Letters*, xiv.

³⁰ R.M. Siddals, 'Logic and Christology in Cyril of Alexandria', *JTS* (ns) 38 (1987), 342 and 350.

shown that Cyril went beyond secondary sources to the originals in terms of his use of Greek philosophy; although it is probable that Cyril was first introduced to the Greek writers through Christian sources, namely Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius of Caesarea, Justin Martyr, and the anonymous work *De Trinitate*.³¹ One note-worthy philosopher to whom Grant claims Cyril was introduced is the Aristotelian commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias. Grant spends some time showing Cyril's familiarity with Alexander's works.³² It is clear that Cyril had knowledge of the philosophers, and had chosen to make use of some of their concepts in his theological expression; for example, ἀπαθὴ πάθη, which Young claims to have been "current Neoplatonist teaching".³³ We know that Cyril knew the philosophers, and was familiar with their teachings, although it is not known that he was schooled in them. We believe that we can demonstrate that the influence of philosophy on Cyril was confined primarily to his style of argument—as argued by Siddals—and language. It will primarily be vocabulary and imagery which find their way from philosophy to Cyril's christology. Cyril was not a philosopher, but a theologian. His christology was not a 'sacred' philosophy, but the result of his understanding of the Bible and the Alexandrian interpretation of it. One cannot dismiss, however, the influence of philosophical images on Cyril's christology. This will be developed at a later point.

Those who had the greatest influence on Cyril were, as would be expected, the well-known Alexandrian theologians; we have already indicated Cyril's Alexandrian heritage. Most notable of these was Athanasius, who was, without doubt, the single, most significant of the Fathers for Cyril. Others included the Cappadocians, Didymus the Blind, Clement, and Theophilus. Kerrigan has argued that Jerome influenced Cyril's biblical interpretation, either through Cyril's direct reading of his commentaries or through other writers.³⁴ Also, Wickham has posited that Cyril's reference to nurture "at the

³¹ R.M. Grant, 'Greek Literature in the Treatise *De Trinitate* and Cyril *Contra Julianum*,' *JTS* n.s. 15 (1964), 265-279.

³² *Ibid.*, 275-279.

³³ F.M. Young, 'A Reconsideration of Alexandrian Christology,' *JEH* 22 (1971), 112. See also H. Chadwick, 'Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian Controversy,' *JTS* (ns) 2 (1951), 145-164. Cf. J.D. McCoy, 'Philosophical Influences on the Doctrine of the Incarnation in Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria,' *Encounter* 38 (1977), 362-391.

³⁴ A. Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: Interpreter of the Old Testament* (Rome, 1952), 435ff.

hands of holy and orthodox Fathers,” may allude to training by monks, though this is in no way certain.³⁵

The influence Athanasius had on Cyril cannot be overstated. One of Cyril’s first works, his *Thesaurus de Trinitate*, was based largely on Athanasius’ *Contra Arianos*.³⁶ Sellers calls Cyril a “disciple of Athanasius”.³⁷ There is no doubt that the extent to which Athanasius was a model for Cyril and helped mould his christological thinking and expression is great. The Alexandrian theological tradition was passed faithfully from Athanasius to Cyril. McGuckin summarises Athanasius’ influence on Cyril well: “even before 428 Cyril’s mind had already been shaped, formed in the living christological tradition of his church, summarised in the great Athanasius”.³⁸ Cyril inherited his theological tradition from his “Father” Athanasius. As we shall see, however, Cyril’s christology was more than a mere restatement of Athanasius’ thought, and the developments to Alexandrian christology which Cyril brought about guaranteed its ultimate survival in the East.

Here we need to comment briefly on the part which Scripture played in Cyril’s christology. We will return to this in greater detail later. The most comprehensive study of Cyril’s exegesis has been done by Kerrigan. Kerrigan, and most since his work, focused on the “senses” of scripture as understood by Cyril and other fathers. The spiritual sense (θεωριὰ πνευματική), in Kerrigan’s estimation, along with Wilken and others, provided Cyril with a typological exegesis, in which various Old Testament events portrayed the coming Christ. Young has taken issue with categorising Cyril and the other fathers as typological, allegorical, literal, or, in Cyril’s case, eclectic.³⁹ Her contention is that these distinctions were totally foreign to the Fathers, whose primary concern was with appropriation of the text rather than artificial categorisations of particular exegetical methods. Young’s excellent study recognises the important connection between exegesis and theology in the Fathers. Attempting to separate them leads to confusion and misunderstanding. At any rate, Cyril sees the link between the Old Testament and the New Testament in the τύποι

³⁵ Wickham, *Select Letters*, xiii. Cf. ACO 1.1.3:22.⁸ This passage is Cyril’s own profession of faith.

³⁶ See esp. J. Liébaert, *La Doctrine christologique de Saint Cyrille d’Alexandrie avant la querelle Nestorienne* (Lille, 1951), 22ff.

³⁷ R.V. Sellers, *Two Ancient Christologies* (London, 1940), 80.

³⁸ McGuckin, 176.

³⁹ F. M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Foundation of the Christian Church* (London, 1997).

Χρίστου found in the Old Testament. For our study, we are interested in what part they play in *illustrating* Cyril's christology. The distinction between Cyril's exegesis and his illustration is anything but clear. To separate Cyril's exegesis from his christology is reading back into Cyril modern forms of classification. However, to determine the extent to which he uses Old Testament passages to illustrate the Incarnation does not necessitate an investigation of his exegetical strategies, methods, or whatever other hermeneutic categories one might seek to devise. The fact of the matter is that Cyril sees in a number of passages useful images which direct the mind towards a fuller understanding of the *mysterium Christi*. It is this understanding, in Cyril's thought, which we are seeking to discover, not his concept of Old Testament (biblical?) exegesis, *per se*.

It is clear that there was no influence on Cyril like the Scriptures.⁴⁰ As his writings make abundantly clear Cyril had a devotion to the understanding and interpretation of the Bible that consumed his entire ministry. Even beyond the influence of Athanasius and the Alexandria tradition he fought so hard to defend, the Scriptures were the life-blood of his theology. Certainly this was the case with christology. From the time Cyril arrived on the International scene until his death, two forces guided his christological thinking: the Bible and orthodox theology.⁴¹ Couple these Christian influences with Cyril's ability to use and mould the language of the day into a useful vocabulary, and one has a theologian equipped for the arduous task of preserving orthodoxy while simultaneously expressing it in more clear terms in the face of persistent heresy. These were the influences which most shaped and guided the Alexandrian Patriarch's theological development and expression.

⁴⁰ The fact that most of his work was commentary on Scripture is sufficient to argue this point. In addition, though, even a cursory reading of his works reveals his constant reference to Scripture as the source of his theology. The Fathers, particularly in their statements at Nicaea and Constantinople, are an important interpretative element for Cyril. Their theology is affirmed as a proper interpretation of Scripture. Nestorius, Cyril believes, has rejected biblical and Nicene-Constantinopolitan doctrine, and is thus heretical.

⁴¹ Wickham states, 'What he [Cyril] brought with him to office were an enviable knowledge of the Bible and orthodox theology', *Select Letters*, xvi. McGuckin concurs, writing, 'the substance of his [Cyril's] learning is built upon the twin pillars of biblical theology and the prior patristic tradition', *The Christological Controversy*, 3. Cf. Cyril's *Ep.* 55 (ACO 1.1.4:49.¹-61.¹⁸; PG 77:289D-320A), in which he expounds the Nicene Creed. Sound doctrine, he says, comes from following the inspired Scriptures. For Cyril, the Fathers at Nicaea (and Constantinople) produced an accurate representation of the faith of the Scriptures.

CHAPTER TWO

IMAGES AND CYRIL'S USE OF SCRIPTURE

As with the development of Cyril's christology in general, his use of images does not occur in a vacuum; there are a variety of determinants which affect how they find their way into his christology and the role they are intended to play in such discussions. Earlier we addressed the context of his life and ministry; that is, those events and influences in his life which helped shape his christological thinking. It is important that one understands especially the Nestorian Controversy, as it was within the heat of such a debate that his vocabulary and imagery was refined and took a concrete form. We will now both hone and expand our previous discussion. In the next two chapters our interest lies in the sources of Cyril's images and the influence they have on his use of them. This will mean an expansion of our discussions of his use of Scripture and philosophy, in particular. As we will see, he was able to find in both areas analogies which served his purpose, and he made use of them frequently. In this chapter our interest lies in the Bible as the source of Cyril's imagery and the influence it had on his use of them. Our goal will be to discover why Cyril chooses the images he did, what force they are intended to possess, and what role they are meant to play in his christology. Our investigation will lead us to conclude that his images are analogical in nature and serve the purpose of illustrating his description of the Incarnation, rather than being descriptive tools themselves. In the end we will be better prepared to reconstruct his christology based on an examination and interpretation of his christological imagery.

That Cyril of Alexandria employs images from the Old Testament as illustrations of the Incarnation is quite obvious. He sets out in his *Scholia de Incarnatione Unigeniti* to "demonstrate the manner of union (τρόπος τῆς ἐνώσεως) using illustrations (παράδειγματα) from the divinely inspired Scripture as in types (ἐν τύποις)".¹ How he concludes that these passages are examples and types of Christ, and the extent to which they "demonstrate" the manner of union are less clear. Interestingly enough, these illustrations have often been ignored by scholars in their interpretation of his christology. Perhaps this void of

¹ *Scholia* (PG 75:1377D).

study into Cyril's use of scriptural images is the result of a failure to take seriously his understanding and use of Scripture, as Wilken has aptly pointed out: "The discussion of Cyril's theology has gone almost without reference to his interpretation of the Scriptures".² The wealth of christological material contained in these analogies has been overlooked because of this lack of interest, which is an unfortunate consequence. We are, therefore, presented with a two-fold task. First, we must address the matter of Cyril's *understanding* of the Scripture, and then determine how that understanding affects his *use* of scriptural images in his christological discussions. This will develop for us a foundation upon which we can construct his picture of Christ as illustrated in scriptural analogies.

Little work has been done specifically in the area of Cyril's hermeneutic. Kerrigan's volume has been the standard for scholars since its publication,³ and has been complemented in recent years by Wilken's insightful study of the influence of Judaism on Cyril's exegesis of both the Old and New Testaments.⁴ Otherwise, most recent works join Koen⁵ and Welch,⁶ simply summarising and affirming Kerrigan's fundamental conclusions. In a wider context, F. Young has added a great deal to the debate over the patristic understanding and use of the Bible,⁷ as has Thomas F. Torrance.⁸ The latter two works have called into question the traditional categories of "literal", "typological", and "allegorical" as descriptions of exegetical systems. Such clear distinctions were not known to the patristic writers, and, as Young contends, the matter of appropriation was most important, whereby the received text was applied to Christian discussions as though it was intended ultimately for the Christian community. Her observations question Kerrigan's conclusions about Cyril's understanding of the "senses" of Scripture, and a re-evaluation of Cyril's hermeneutic considering such observations would be of significant value. Our intention is not to enter into the debate over exegesis,

² Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*, 3.

³ Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: Interpreter of the Old Testament*. In addition, Kerrigan has produced an article dealing with Cyril's use of the New Testament, 'The Objects of the Literal and Spiritual Senses of Scripture in the New Testament according to Cyril of Alexandria', *StudPat* 8 (1957), 354-374.

⁴ Wilken, *Judaism*.

⁵ L. Koen, *Saving Passion: Incarnational and Soteriological Thought in Cyril of Alexandria's Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Uppsala, 1991).

⁶ L. Welch, *Christology and Eucharist in the Early Thought of Cyril of Alexandria* (London, 1994).

⁷ Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Foundation of the Christian Church*.

⁸ T. F. Torrance, *Divine Meaning: Studies in Patristic Hermeneutics* (Edinburgh, 1997).

though such debate is needed, but to make some observations about both Cyril's understanding and his use of Scripture within a christological context. This review will reveal two important conclusions that will, in turn, be the basis of a further investigation into the images of Christ found in the Hebrew Scriptures, and the force they are intended to have in illustrating the *mysterium Christi*. First, many, though not all, Old Testament passages can be interpreted in two equally valid ways, depending on the perspective of the interpreter. Second, it is the *skopos* (σκοπός), or purpose, of Scripture that allows for the two interpretations. The two-fold purpose of Scripture, and thus the two meanings of some passages, allows for a particular text to be a type of Christ, if a component of the image corresponds to a statement made about Christ elsewhere in Scripture. In addition, analogies "demonstrate" the Incarnation insofar as they point the reader's mind to something that is ineffable, and make it more clear. They are not intended to be models of the Incarnation, but analogies, by which some component of Cyril's christology is qualified and clarified.

*The Self-Revelation of God:
Cyril's Understanding of the Old Testament*

The basis for Cyril's understanding of the Old Testament is his conception of a two-fold purpose for Scripture. As we shall see, this is not the same thing as two senses, for the latter connotes something about the nature of the text, whereas the former is concerned with the intention of the author, his σκοπός. Inseparable from this is Cyril's belief that Scripture was "spoken by the one Holy Spirit", and is thus the *logos* of God.⁹ Regardless of immediate human authorship the Old Testament is God speaking to humankind, and it is therefore ἡ θεόπνευστος Γραφή.¹⁰ Consequently, Cyril's interest is in *why* the Spirit of God spoke these words to humankind.

Initially, the Old Testament was delivered to the people of God, in Cyril's opinion, in order to guide their behaviour. The ordinances of the Law are joined with narratives, prophecies, and proverbs for the purpose of leading the Jews to right conduct, which was obedience to their God. Moreover, the prescriptive elements of the Old Testament

⁹ *Commentarium in Isaiam prophetum* (PG 70:565A).

¹⁰ Modern categories of inspiration would have, of course, been unknown to Cyril, and are beyond the scope of this study. It is sufficient to note that Cyril conceived of Scripture as spoken by God and therefore the source of orthodox belief about him.

are of use to the Christian as well, to reveal to us the proper standards of moral living. This is what we have chosen to term the *prescriptive purpose* of Scripture. In other words, God has spoken to his people—the record of which is the Old Testament—to prescribe a standard of behaviour, whether ceremonial, legal, or moral.

This first purpose is superseded, however, by a higher *raison d'être*. In the Scripture that God has spoken to his people, he is about the work of progressively revealing himself, a process culminating ultimately in the Incarnation of the Logos of God. The written *logos* of God is therefore intrinsically related to the Logos of God who became a human being in the Incarnation. This is, then, the *revelatory purpose* of Scripture. The Old Testament is not the final revelation of God, but contains the “first elements” of God’s self-disclosure, the initial *Vox Dei* to his people.¹¹ As it is the *beginning* of God’s revelation of himself, it is only a partial revelation. Cyril illustrates his point with the interesting analogy of a painting.¹² An artist begins with outlines and shadows that faintly resemble the intended outcome. Progressively, more clarity and colour are added to the outlines until eventually the finished painting appears out of what was once only a shadow of the completed portrait. The outlines are not done away with, but they are refined as more paint is added. In time the shadows give way to what was the ultimate intention of the artist. This is how one ought to understand the progressive self-revelation of God. The Old Testament is like the outlines and dark shadows of the painting. In its passages God is giving an initial statement about himself. That statement is, just like the outlines, in need of refinement and clarity, and is incomplete; not with regards to its historical elements, but in its role as the medium by which God progressively reveals himself. Christ serves to transform the outlines and shadows, as it were, into the finished painting, as he is the complete and full self-revelation of God. In him [Christ] the revelation of God which began softly and dimly in the Old Testament is completed.¹³ Therefore, the Old Testament is both incomplete and complete at the same time, with Christ making the difference.¹⁴ We shall return to this in a moment.

The hermeneutical consequence of affirming a two-fold purpose of Scripture is, for Cyril, a recognition that many, though not all, passages of the Old Testament contain two (at least) equally valid ways of

¹¹ *De adoratione* (PG 68:140A).

¹² *Glaphyra* (PG 69:225C).

¹³ *Commentarium in Isaiam prophetum* (PG 70:576A); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:36,^{33ff}, 66.³⁶⁻³⁹; PG 76:69C, 145B).

¹⁴ Pusey I, 85:25.

being read. In his *Commentary on the Minor Prophets* Cyril states about the text in question, "These verses have two meanings", although this is not necessarily true of all prophecies.¹⁵ The same is true of both narratives and ordinances of the Old Testament, and those which can be interpreted in two ways are to be inspected so that both meanings may be discovered.¹⁶ One must take caution, however, as some narratives and ordinances have only one meaning, rather than two.¹⁷ Likewise, some proverbs have but one way in which they should be interpreted, while others should be explored for a second, inner meaning.¹⁸ In each type of Old Testament literature all texts have an obvious, historical meaning, while there are some texts which have two. The interpretation that is proper for all passages is termed *ιστορία*. When a text possesses a second interpretation it is called the *θεωρία πνευματική*. Each passage should be considered according to its own mode or manner; that is, its purpose.¹⁹ In other words, if the purpose of the text is question is solely prescriptive, then only the *ιστορία* is to be found. However, if the purpose of a particular passage is additionally revelatory, then one ought to seek for the *θεωρία πνευματική*. We will see shortly how Cyril distinguishes those passages that possess a two-fold purpose from those with only a prescriptive purpose.

Translating these expressions causes great difficulty, as the traditional English translations can carry considerable baggage. We have chosen to translate *ιστορία* as "historical meaning" and *θεωρία πνευματική* as "spiritual meaning", but would clarify these translations as follows. "Historical" should not be understood as implying that other interpretations do not find their reality in historical events. Likewise, one should not read these translations as synonyms for the traditional categories of literal and allegorical (or typological). The focus of both *ιστορία* and *θεωρία πνευματική* is the intention of the author—in this case the Holy Spirit—and not a hermeneutical method or system. The hypothesis that *θεωρία πνευματική* is not true to the text, and is therefore eisegesis rather than exegesis does not hold up under examination. Neither is it correct to assume that *θεωρία πνευματική* is unconcerned with the *Sitz im Leben* of the passage.

¹⁵ Pusey I, 517:11; *Commentarium in Oseam prophetam* (PG 71:12B).

¹⁶ *Glaphyra* (PG 69:293B); *Commentarium in Isaïam prophetum* (PG 70:9A).

¹⁷ *Ibid.* (PG 69:192B).

¹⁸ *Thesaurus* (PG 75:261B).

¹⁹ *Glaphyra* (PG 69:192B).

On the other hand, the designations of historical and spiritual should not be mistaken as affirming a χωρισμός between the κόσμος αἰσθητός and the κόσμος νοητός. Although Cyril recognised and affirmed the transcendence of God and the distinction between the Creator and the creature, he does not infer from this that a complete separation exists such that God is incapable of working really and truly within his creation. Quite the opposite is true: God must be understood to work within our time and space, otherwise the entire system of *kenosis*, whereby God himself becomes human in order to redeem humankind, is undermined. In addition, the Incarnation is a reality, rather than a docetic manifestation.²⁰ There is not a hint of this type of separation in Cyril's thought. Like his mentor Athanasius before him, he has rejected the Platonic and Neoplatonic idea of a separation of realities.²¹ In the end, however, translations must be made, and we have chosen to use the terms "historical meaning" and "spiritual meaning", trusting that this discussion has been a sufficient warning about reading too much into the English terms. We will employ the Greek regularly to aid the reader in avoiding unnecessary confusion. Furthermore, a discussion of Cyril's use of ἱστορία and θεωρία πνευματική will help clarify their intended uses.

The ἱστορία of a text is that interpretation that is derived from the things in it that are perceived by the senses.²² The historical meaning itself is not what is perceptible to the senses, but rather the components of the passage which reveal the historical meaning. In other words, it is not the referent of the text that is historical, but the particular parts of the text itself. The command in Exodus for Moses to "put your hand in your bosom" provides a clear example. In reading the text, the senses observe a command intended to invoke a response from Moses: he is to place his hand within his garment. Therefore, the ἱστορία of the text is the command itself, because it is understood by the senses.²³ Consequently, the historical meaning is obvious, and can be found without outside assistance or additional information: the text itself provides its own interpretation.²⁴ This is not to imply that Cyril does not recognise various figures of speech, such as simile, metaphor, and the like. Obviously he acknowledges these tools of rhetoric, and sees them as important means by which

²⁰ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:17.^{15ff}, PG 76:21Bf).

²¹ For Athanasius, see T. F. Torrance, 'Hermeneutics of Athanasius' in *Divine Meaning*, 230.

²² *Commentarium in Oseam prophetam* (PG 71:12B).

²³ Pusey I, 159:25.

²⁴ *Glaphyra* (PG 69:541B); *Thesaurus* (75:261B).

the intended message is carried.²⁵ In fact, the recognition of tropes by Cyril strengthens our contention that by *ιστορία* he means that interpretation which can be discerned by the human mind using the sense, rather than some "sense" presumably possessed by the passage itself. The *ιστορία* is that which is concerned with the "events and pronouncements of history".²⁶ Cyril says that it was intended to be a rule of right conduct,²⁷ to warn Israel of the consequences of her sin,²⁸ and ultimately to lead her to righteousness.²⁹ Thus the historical interpretation of the Old Testament was proper for Israel. Cyril writes, "[I]n their own time [the Scriptures] were understood as they were spoken, as in the command to Moses, "Put your hand in your bosom".³⁰ This is true for each of the narratives, ordinances, proverbs, and prophecies of the Old Testament, even those that possess two meanings. The *ιστορία* is also useful to the Christian interpreter. Therefore, "we do not do away with what is useful in the *ιστορία* as though it is useless (*ξωλον*)".³¹ Likewise, in his *Commentary on Hosea*, Cyril writes, "No argument will persuade us to belittle the *ιστορία*".³² Before the *θεωρία πνευματική* is sought, "we shall first explain the things which were written historically (*τὰ ιστορικῶς πεπραγμένονα*)".³³ There is practical instruction in the *ιστορία* for the Christian: *ὁ τῆς ιστορίας ἡμᾶς ἀναπείθει λόγος* to abstain from the works of the flesh.³⁴ The historical meaning is important for, and is a proper interpretation of the texts of the Old Testament, as is summarised in the following statement from Cyril's *Commentary on Isaiah*:

Those who belittle (*παραιτούμενοι*) the *ιστορία* in the divinely inspired Scriptures as being something useless (*ξωλον*), miss the ability to understand more the proper meaning (*τρόπον*) of the things written in them.... When things from the Holy Scriptures that have been written historically (*ιστορικῶς*) are introduced to us, what is useful from the historical facts (*τῆς ιστορίας*) is properly pursued, in order that the divinely inspired Scriptures may be seen to altogether save and help us.³⁵

²⁵ See Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 61-81.

²⁶ Pusey II, 243:16.

²⁷ *De adoratione* (PG 68:540B).

²⁸ Pusey I, 288:9; 599:5; II, 2:2.

²⁹ *De adoratione* (PG 68:521A).

³⁰ Pusey I, 159:25.

³¹ *De adoratione* (PG 68:540B). See also 544C.

³² Pusey I, 15:12.

³³ *Glaphyra* (PG 69:16A). See also 293B.

³⁴ *De adoratione* (PG 68:192B).

³⁵ *Commentarium in Isaiam prophetum* (PG 70:192A).

The interpreter discovers the *ιστορία* of a text because of a particular perspective, that of viewing the passage in the light of its prescriptive purpose. Cyril refers to this as observing the text *αἰνιγματωδῶς*, and indicates that this is the manner in which the Jews perceived the Old Testament.³⁶ By this he means that the spiritual meaning of the passage was hidden from them, and not that the historical meaning was insignificant. Interpreting Scripture with regard to its prescriptive purpose results in discovering the *ιστορία*, a legitimate interpretation of the Old Testament.

As we just saw, the Jews observed the Scripture *αἰνιγματωδῶς*. However, Christians are said to observe the same text *νοητῶς*, *πνευματικῶς*, καὶ κατὰ γε τὸ ἀληθές.³⁷ Once again we see that perspective determines interpretation. When viewed enigmatically (i.e., considering the historical components of the text alone), a passage yields the historical meaning (*ιστορία*). However, when viewed in the light of the revelatory purpose of Scripture, the passage yields the *θεωρία πνευματική*, which is the higher of the two interpretations and the one for which the Christian exegete should look. There is nothing to prevent the Scripture from using the *ιστορία* in an elegant manner, i.e., not to “expound the lives, but to impart the knowledge of his saving mystery, that the word concerning him become true and clear”.³⁸ In commenting on the Pentateuch, Cyril says that he will begin by explaining the *ιστορία*, but will then explore the passages more deeply in order to give a clear explanation of the *θεωρία πνευματική*.³⁹ The spiritual meaning is an “inner meaning” that cannot be discovered based on the historical elements of the passage alone.⁴⁰ Many prophetic statements go beyond the mere historical meaning to one that is innermost (*ἐσωτάτα*) and spiritual (*πνευματικά*).⁴¹ The *θεωρία πνευματική* is deep, and requires the interpreter to seek eagerly and earnestly for the meaning that is buried in the text.⁴² It is like a flower covered by leaves; the spiritual meaning is obscured if only the historical components of the passage are seen. The *ιστορία* must be peeled away, like the leaves covering

³⁶ *Adversus Julianum* (PG 76:996C). The Greek rhetoricians employed *αἰνιγμα* to denote a figure of speech in which both the meaning and expression is obscure. Cf. Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria*, 63f.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Glaphyra* (PG 69:308C).

³⁹ *Ibid.* (PG 69:16A).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* (PG 69:192B; 293B).

⁴¹ *Commentarium in Oseam prophetam* (PG 71:12B).

⁴² *Commentarium in Isaiam prophetam* (PG 70:565C).

the flower, if the θεωρία πνευματική is to be found.⁴³ We must look beyond the ιστορία and deeper into the passage if we are to "obtain the inner fruit of the oracle".⁴⁴ This is not allegory or tropology, wherein the obvious is merely a symbol of that which is hidden. Rather, both interpretations are legitimate. Because they are both valid, knowledge of the historical meaning (ιστορία) alone is only "half-knowledge".⁴⁵ Whereas a perspective of the text that sees only the historical components of it, and therefore obtains only the historical meaning, a perspective which looks for what lies behind the ιστορία discovers the spiritual meaning. The object to which the historical meaning refers is, generally speaking, the conduct of the people of God, while the referent of the spiritual meaning is Christ. Still, however, the meaning is spiritual not because of its object, but because of the perspective one must have to find it, just as the meaning is historical because one views it in the light of the historical elements of the passage, not because it refers to the conduct of God's people. Therefore, though the text itself remains unchanged, a change of perspective yields a variant interpretation. For each meaning, then, there is a corresponding perspective from which we may view the Old Testament. One might consider a piece of needlework. When viewed from the underside, the needlework appears to be a mess of string, loosely attached, and without any apparent order. When viewed from the other side, however, an entirely different conclusion is revealed. Now, the work of the artist is readily seen. Admittedly, the image breaks down rather quickly; however, the crucial point is clear: one's interpretation of the needlework is dependent on one's perspective. For Cyril, this is the case with the Old Testament. Just as with our image there were two options, bottom and top, so it is with the Scriptures: there is a historical perspective, and a spiritual perspective, each resulting in their respective reading.

Consequently, the Incarnation is the watershed between the historical meaning, gleaned from observing the text αινιγματωδώς and the spiritual meaning, discovered when the passage is viewed νοητώς, πνευματικώς, and according to ἀληθές. In the same way that Jacob peeled off the bark of reeds to reveal the white interior, Christ "peeled off the shadows of the law and the veil of the prophetic writings".⁴⁶ Through Christ, one can remove the ιστορία and dis-

⁴³ *Glaphyra* (PG 69:137C).

⁴⁴ *De adoratione* (PG 68:585D).

⁴⁵ Pusey I, 85:25.

⁴⁶ *Glaphyra* (PG 69:241B).

cover the innermost *θεωρία πνευματική*. The Incarnation becomes the event that transforms the perspective from which we observe the Old Testament. Put another way, Cyril writes, “In the beginning the law sounded only softly. But when Emmanuel shone forth and the word concerning the Gospel reached us, that sound became louder”.⁴⁷ At another place in the same work he states, “In Christ the Law is spiritual”, and that the Law is like a weak voice, but Christ speaks with clarity and a deep-resounding explanation of it.⁴⁸ The Incarnate Word is called light and light-giver precisely because he has illumined the dark shadows of the Law.⁴⁹ Clearly, the person and work of Christ is the content of the spiritual meaning of the Old Testament. Therefore, we ought to read the Old Testament through the lens of the Incarnation, and discover the revelation of him buried beneath the *ιστορία*. How we interpret the Scripture, then, is determined by whether we view it as containing mere narratives, prophecies, and prescriptions, or as containing images that demonstrate to us the Christ-event.

We can now develop a more complete understanding of the *ιστορία* and the *θεωρία πνευματική*. The first is a result of viewing the text *ιστορικῶς* and *αἰνιγματωδῶς*. We have seen already what is meant by a historical perspective. In addition, seeing a passage *ιστορικῶς* means seeing it *αἰνιγματωδῶς*, or in its role as an enigma.⁵⁰ As such, the inner meaning of the text is hidden and obscure. This is not implying that the Jews, to whom the Scripture was originally given, were capable of interpreting the enigma according to its revelatory purpose. Rather, the meaning is “present” in the text—without any spatial or physical connotations intended—even when it is interpreted according to its prescriptive purpose. The spiritual meaning is that which makes more clear the mystery of Christ. The revelatory perspective is an Incarnational perspective, wherein the Incarnation becomes the medium by which one interprets the Old Testament. The purpose (*σκοπός*) of Scripture is to reveal to us (*ἡμῖν*) the mystery of Christ through a myriad of objects (*διὰ μυρίων πραγμάτων*), thus affirming the revelatory purpose of Scripture, and the spiritual, christological interpretation it provides for the interpreter.⁵¹ The inclusion of *ἡμῖν* demonstrates that the spiritual meaning is for the Christian, i.e., the interpreter looking through the lens of

⁴⁷ *De adoratione* (PG 68:489B).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* (PG 68:253AB).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* (PG 68:489A).

⁵⁰ *Glaphyra* (PG 69:225C).

⁵¹ *Ibid.* (PG 69:308C).

the Incarnation. These multitudinous objects are similar to the many images of a king, which are exhibited throughout his kingdom.⁵² Each image conjures up thoughts of the king and is an analogy, as it were, which points towards his reality. The images in the Old Testament serve to point the interpreter to the reality of the Incarnation, and so serve as analogies of Christ. They are present because Christ is the end (τέλος) of the Law and the prophets.⁵³ The self-revelation of God that is incomplete in the Old Testament, is made complete (τέλος) in the Person of Christ. Likewise, the Law is a teacher which leads us to the mystery of Christ,⁵⁴ every prophetic oracle looks towards Christ and is turned towards him,⁵⁵ the Law sows the seeds of the knowledge of the mystery of Christ,⁵⁶ Moses predicted the mystery of Christ,⁵⁷ and the divinely inspired Scripture described beforehand (in the Old Testament) the salvation of Christ.⁵⁸ In a real way the Incarnation is revealed and predicated in the Hebrew Scriptures. Discovering it there does not require finding a hidden "sense", but a hidden meaning that can be found only by viewing the text from a christological perspective, based upon the revelatory purpose of Scripture. The θεωρία πνευματική is hidden by the ιστορία to those who do not look through the lens of the Incarnation.

Caution must be taken not to misunderstand Cyril's christological interpretation of the Old Testament as a denial of its historical nature, something he was eager to make clear. This is more than the eisegesis and allegory of which he and others are so often accused. The Hebrew Scripture is the initial, albeit incomplete, self-revelation of God. As the summit of this self-disclosure was the Incarnation of the Logos of God himself, it is through the Incarnation that all revelation ought now to be interpreted. Therefore, even within the canon of the Old Testament is to be found numerous images and analogies of Christ. Although Moses and other Old Testament characters were historical figures, and the narratives record genuine historical events, and the ordinances were given to guide conduct, and the prophets warned the people of Israel about their sin, they are only types (τύποι). We will see shortly the significance of the term τύπος, but

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.* (PG 69:16A).

⁵⁴ *De adoratione* (PG 68:140A).

⁵⁵ *Glaphyra* (PG 69:140B).

⁵⁶ *De adoratione* (PG 68:140B).

⁵⁷ *Dialogues* (PG 73:428A).

⁵⁸ *Glaphyra* (PG 69:225C).

suffice it now to say that a type points the mind to something else.⁵⁹ In regard to the passages from the Old Testament, they point to the Incarnation, and serve the purpose of making known the reality of God's ultimate self-revelation in Christ. Discovering this meaning involves looking beyond the obvious elements of the text, and interpreting it through the lens of the Incarnation. Before we demonstrate the force, or intended effect of Cyril's use of these images, we must first discover how he differentiated between Old Testament texts that have only a *ιστορία* and those which have both a *ιστορία* and a *θεωρία πνευματική*.

*The Harmony of the Scriptures:
Cyril's Christological Use of the Old Testament*

As we observed in the preceding section, Cyril conceives of a two-fold purpose of Scripture; the first being *prescriptive*, the second *revelatory*. When we interpret the Old Testament in the light of its prescriptive purpose, we discover the historical meaning (*ιστορία*), which is intended to guide behaviour, whether ceremonial, moral, or otherwise. In this case, it is the obvious, historical elements of the text that yields its meaning. However, when we interpret it considering its revelatory purpose, we find the inner, spiritual meaning (*θεωρία πνευματική*), which points us to the progressive self-revelation of God, having its ultimate fulfilment in Christ, the Incarnation of God himself. The Christian exegete is to interpret the Scripture through the lens of the Incarnation, and thus discover the inner, spiritual, christological meaning of the text according to the self-disclosure of God. It is his christological *understanding* of the Old Testament that affords him with his christological *use* of it.

Other terms could be employed to label Cyril's use of Scripture. He describes passages from the Old Testament that illustrate Christ as *εἰκοναι*, *τύποι*, and *παραδείγματα*, and his use could therefore be termed 'exemplary', 'typological', or 'paradeigmatic'. Although these terms are synonymous with one another, they are not as accurate as 'christological', which acknowledges the central theme of *why* the Hebrew Scripture is of use to the Christian, particularly Cyril. The term 'christological' is therefore more fundamental than the other terms, as passages take on the role of image, type, and *paradeigma* only because

⁵⁹ Pusey I, 600:10.

of their revelatory, and therefore christological, purpose. For these reasons, 'christological' will be the preferred term.

We have seen that the fundamental reason for Cyril's christological use of the Old Testament is the unbroken revelation of God beginning therein, and culminating in the Incarnation. In other words, Christ is the subject of both the Old and New Testaments, which unites the two into one record of revelation: "The New Testament is sister to and closely related to the Mosaic oracles; indeed it is composed of *the self-same elements*".⁶⁰ In both cases, the composition is God's self-disclosure, and therefore the person and work of Christ. Moreover, Isaiah is said to share in the gospel κηρύγματα, implying the continuity of revelation in both Testaments.⁶¹ Most striking, however, is Cyril's comment that "[t]he whole of Scripture is but one single book, because it was spoke by the one Holy Spirit".⁶² In other words, the statements made in the Old Testament are congruous with those made in the New. The New Testament is a complement to rather than a supplement for the Old, as is evident from Cyril's insistence that the Hebrew Scripture is useful to the Christian. The object to which all Scripture ultimately refers then is Christ. Cyril's recognition of a harmony between Testaments affords him the liberty to ascribe particular Old Testament passages to Christ, the *skopos* of all Scripture..

Cyril uses analogies from the Old Testament prolifically in his christological controversy with Nestorius. Most frequent occurrences are in the *Scholia de Incarnatione Unigeniti*, though they appear often in other works as well. There are five christological themes that are expounded by these images ranging from the nature of the union to the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. In this section we are most concerned with the choice of texts which Cyril makes, and the reason he does so. A more complete inquiry into what the images reveal about Cyril's christology will follow.

⁶⁰ *De adoratione* (PG 68:137A). My emphasis. Cyril's comments about Scripture are remarkably close to those made by Origen in a number of places. Cf. *De principiis*. One noteworthy departure is Origen's claim that everything written in the Law is a figure of Christ, *Commentary on John*, 13:26. Cyril recognises that some passages from the Old Testament are not to be interpreted christologically. Similar sentiments can be found in Athanasius, who continually insisted on the 'single mind' of Scripture. See Athanasius' *De decretis* and *Contra Arianos*. Cf. Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 29-45; T. F. Torrance, 'The Hermeneutics of Athanasius', esp. 235-244

⁶¹ *Commentarium in Isaiam prophetum* (PG 70:13B).

⁶² *Ibid.* (PG 70:565A).

A series of analogies begins in the eighth paragraph of the *Scholia* within the context of “what we confess the union (ἔνωσις) to be”. There are a number of technical unions from which one could choose to describe the Incarnation: friendly agreement, juxtaposition, and mixture just to name a few. None of these methods of uniting two bodies adequately explains the union of God and humanity in Christ. Rather, it is ineffable (ἄπορρήτος), known only to God.⁶³ In contrast to these technical manners of union, the Incarnation is like the union of a person’s body and soul. One is not aware of *how* the resultant of this union of two things is one person, but it is so. Moreover, the soul maintains ownership of the body and makes the properties of the body its own. Likewise, in the union of divinity and humanity, the Word possesses ownership of the body, thereby making the properties of humankind his own. In addition, the Word shares his properties with the body, because it is his own body. There are additional analogies which are examples of the union, and Cyril introduces them by stating, “If it is necessary (εἰ χρή) to illustrate the manner of union (τρόπον τῆς ἐνώσεως) using illustrations (παραδείγματα) from the divinely inspired Scripture as in types (ἐν τύποις), then come let us do so, as we are able”.⁶⁴ He then proceeds to offer a number of Old Testament passages that he contends illuminate the manner of the union. We will now examine these παραδείγματα and τύποι in order to determine what prompts Cyril to employ them in a christological manner, i.e., what makes them useful analogies of Christ.

The first image is taken from the vision of the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah sees God sitting high upon his throne and the angels worshipping him. The prophet is then approached by an angel who is carrying a burning coal. The coal is placed upon the lips of Isaiah, purging him of his sin and purifying him. The burning coal of the angel is a type (τύπος) and an image (εἰκόνων) for us of the Incarnation of the Word. How does Cyril know that the coal is a τύπος and an εἰκόνων of Christ? What gives this passage a θεωρία πνευματική? The indicator in the vision is that when we confess our sins to Christ, and he touches our lips, “he renders us purged of all our sins, and free from our ancient transgressions”.⁶⁵ The correlation between the coal’s power to purge Isaiah of his sin, and Christ’s power to purge the believer of his sin creates the link between the passage in the Old Testament and the Christ event. This correlation is possible because

⁶³ *Scholia* (PG 75:1376C).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1377D).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1377D-1380A).

of the revelatory purpose of Scripture, and the resulting harmony of Old and New Testaments. The New Testament makes a statement about Christ: he forgives sins. In turn, the similar statement made about the coal in Isaiah's visions allows for its inclusion in christological discussions. In other words, because a component of the Old Testament passage corresponds to statements made about Christ elsewhere in the "one book of Scripture", the text can legitimately be employed christologically.

Another παραδείγμα of the union demonstrates as well that if the Logos is separated from the humanity, then the entire union is destroyed, and with it the economic condescension of the Word.⁶⁶ Cyril writes, "The Lord introduces himself when he says, 'I am the flower of the field, the lily of the valleys' (Song of Songs 2:1 LXX)". This is a type or analogy of Christ because "his own transcendent and sublime nature of the Godhead perfumes the world in the humanity as its particular base". In addition, Christ is said to give forth the savour of the Father. Once again, there is a direct correlation between this passage and descriptions of Christ elsewhere in Scripture. This reiterates our previously stated contention that Cyril's understanding of Christ as the ultimate object to which all Scripture refers enables him to enlist the Old Testament for the cause of "illustrating" particular elements of the Incarnation. Whether or not a particular text ought to be employed in this manner is determined by the presence or absence of some element of the text that is parallel with something said about Christ elsewhere in Scripture.

These two images from the *Scholia* are also utilised together in *Adversus Nestorium*, along with a third analogy: the pearl of great price spoken of by Christ himself.⁶⁷ Although not taken from the Old Testament, this image illustrates the same thing as the lily, namely, that if the Word and the humanity are divided, the destruction of the union means the demise of the economy. Additionally, the employment of this image is another example of how Scripture can be said to illustrate the Incarnation. Jesus does not imply that the pearl is referring to himself, much less state it explicitly. What, then, makes it useful in a christological context? It is a type of Christ because of correlative statements about the image within the text and about Christ elsewhere in Scripture. Characteristic of the pearl is its brightness, and "in his proper nature he [Christ] has the God-befitting brightness of God the Father". We see here as well an example of the

⁶⁶ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:33.³¹⁻³⁵; PG:76:61D).

⁶⁷ Matthew 13:45-46.

difference between *ιστορία* and *θεωρία πνευματική* in the New Testament. The historical meaning would be an interpretation of Jesus' parable as it related to the Kingdom of God. The spiritual interpretation, however, involves looking for a deeper, christological meaning. In this case, the christological message is an example or type of the union.

Next Cyril wishes to demonstrate that the Logos of God enters a true union (*ἔνωσις ἀληθής*) with humanity (*ἀνθρώπινον*), yet the two remain unconfused (*ἀσύγχυτα*) even in the union. An Old Testament image utilised here is the Ark of the Covenant. God instructed that the Ark be made out of imperishable wood, and covered with pure gold both inside and out.⁶⁸ The imperishable wood from which the Ark was formed is a type (*τύπος*) of the incorruptible body of Christ. The gold which covered it illustrates the pre-eminence of the divine nature. That the wood was covered both within and without shows that Christ was both body and soul, i.e., the humanity was complete. Just as the Ark remained wood even when covered with the gold, and the gold was not confused with the wood, so too did the humanity never cease being humanity and the natures remain unconfused. How, though, is this instruction to Moses to be transformed into a *παραδείγμα* of the Incarnation? Just as before, there is a correlative statement somewhere else in Scripture: the Ark was intended to precede the Israelites, and Christ himself said, "I go ahead and prepare a place for you". Rather than being an allegorical interpretation of the passage, the fact that Christ makes a statement about himself that is also made about the Ark implies that the Old Testament passage is to be taken as an image of Christ.

Another Old Testament type of the Incarnation is the burning bush narrative. God appeared to Moses in the fire that took hold of the bush, but did not consume it. Wood is usually fuel for fire, and is not able to keep from being consumed, but in this case the impossible occurs. This demonstrates to us that God is able to perform such an impossible act. It also illustrates for us that the humanity, which could easily be consumed by the divine majesty remains, and no confusion or mixture has taken place in the Incarnation. We are presented with a deviation in this instance from what we have seen in each type this far; namely, that an element of the analogy corresponds with a statement about Christ elsewhere in Scripture. Cyril gives us no such statement in this passage. Instead, he is prompted to use this analogy because of a statement about God: nothing is impossible for him.

⁶⁸ *Scholia* (PG 75:1380D). Cf. Exodus 25:10-11.

Cyril writes, "it was not impossible for God to make himself endurable to the measures of the humanity".⁶⁹ It is then God the Word to whom he refers, and our premise still remains that it is a correlative statement about the Son that enables the interpreter to search for a *θεωρία πνευματική* in a given text from Scripture.

A third christological theme that is illustrated by Old Testament images (*exempla, παραδείγματα*) is that the Logos of God become a human person remained God even in the Incarnate state, that he did not become less than fully God in order to become a human person. The first example in this series is the Mercy Seat.⁷⁰ It was to be made of pure gold, and have two cherabim, one on either side, turned towards one another watching over it. The Mercy Seat is a type (*aenigma, τύπος*) of how God remained God even in the Incarnation. As evidence that this passage has an inner, *θεωρία πνευματική*, Cyril cites two passages from the New Testament.⁷¹ In both instances, Christ is said to be our *propitiatorium*, the propitiation for our sins. The term for Mercy Seat is also *propitiatorium*, and therefore the link is formed. Once again, an element of the image corresponds to a statement made about Christ elsewhere in Scripture. To show that this analogy is to be interpreted as demonstrating that Christ was God, we should look to the vision of Isaiah.⁷² In the vision, the angels are gazing towards God and worshipping him. This corresponds with the cherabim who are continually watching over the Mercy Seat, the *propitiatorium*.

The second example in this series is that of the rod which Moses cast at the feet of Pharaoh. When the rod was put onto the ground, it was transformed into a serpent. When Moses picked it up again, it turned back into a rod. Before Pharaoh the Egyptian Magi turned their rods into snakes as well, but it is recorded that Moses' snake/rod devoured theirs. How is this a type of Christ's divinity? The correlative component is found in the rod. A rod is the symbol of a ruler. Scripture says that "to the Son [Christ] he [the Father] gave power over all things",⁷³ and "Your throne, O God, endures forever, a rod of equity is the rod of your dominion".⁷⁴ Therefore, the Son of God in nature (*natura, φύσις*) and truth (*veritate, ἀληθεία*) is the rod of the Father. The casting of the rod to the earth demonstrates the Word

⁶⁹ *QUSC* (PG 75:1293A).

⁷⁰ *Scholia* (PG 75:1387Dff). Exodus 25:17-20.

⁷¹ 1 John 2:1-2 and Romans 3:25.

⁷² Isaiah 6.

⁷³ John 17:2.

⁷⁴ Psalm 44:7.

being sent to earth through his humanity. That Christ became in the likeness of wicked men is illustrated in the rod becoming a serpent, the symbol of wickedness. Parenthetically within this passage Cyril interjects another image to complement his argument that the serpent is an image and type. Moses lifted up a bronze serpent, a symbol of wickedness, among the Hebrews in order that any afflicted by snake bites could look upon it and be healed. Likewise, the Logos took the form of wicked men in order to give those who turn to him life and to aid them in avoiding evil powers. In addition to this parallel component, Jesus himself stated, "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so shall the Son of Man be lifted up, so that all who believe in him may not be lost but may have eternal life".⁷⁵ In addition, just as the rod of Moses devoured the serpents of the Magi, so too did the Word of God become a human person overcome the wickedness of humanity. Furthermore, the serpent was taken up by Moses and became a rod once again. In like manner, the Son did not remain on the earth, but returned to heaven with his flesh to be seated at the right hand of the Father, demonstrating that throughout the economy, the Word remained God.

Concluding this particular series of images is the narrative in which God made Moses' hand leprous, then restored it to health again.⁷⁶ God instructs Moses to place his hand within his garment, and then remove it. When the hand is removed, it has been made leprous. Moses was then directed to repeat the process, this time with a different result: the hand was restored. Scripture says that the Son is the right hand of the Father, and that "I [the Father] have founded the heavens by my own hand", and "by the Word of the Lord the heavens were made". Therefore, the hand in the passage and the corresponding references to the Son as the "hand" of the Father indicate that this text should be interpreted christologically. It demonstrates for us that while the Son was in the bosom of the Father, as it were,⁷⁷ he shone with the splendour of deity. But when he was "brought out" in the Incarnation, he was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and became sin for us, that we might become righteous in him. The Law had said that the leper was unclean, just as sinners are unclean in the sight of God. After the resurrection, however, the Son returned to the Father again and appeared clean, though not without his humanity.

⁷⁵ John 3:14.

⁷⁶ Exodus 4:6.

⁷⁷ John 1:18.

To argue a similar point Cyril employs the image of Jacob's stone.⁷⁸ The name Christ is not to be used of the Word of God separated from his humanity, but it is through his condescension and *kenosis* that he has been anointed according to the flesh, and not his own nature. Scripture "proves" this to us with the example of the stone being anointed with oil. The oil was poured only on the surface (ἄκρον) of the stone, indicating that the Word was anointed only externally (ἐξωφανῶς), and thus in the humanity only. We know that this is a type of Christ because he is called "a choice stone, a cornerstone, precious, and set for the foundation of Zion by God the Father".⁷⁹ This corresponds with the stone in the Genesis narrative.

The image is also a type of the final christological theme: how the Word become a human person is conceived to suffer in the flesh, though remain impassible as God.⁸⁰ Only the surface of the stone was anointed with the oil, and only the humanity of Christ is said to have suffered. The evidence that this text has a θεωρία πνευματική is the same as mentioned in the prior paragraph.

Returning to the *Scholia*, another series of images demonstrates for us "the passion of Christ, and how it is useful to speak in two manners about one and the same person, but not to divide him into two". Christ suffers a genuine human death, but the Logos, who is impassible as God, remains untouched by the sufferings *in his own nature*. The Word is said to have suffered—though impassibly—because he has appropriated to himself those things which belong to the humanity. This is the same as with a human person, whose body suffers, but whose soul knows the sufferings only impassibly, through its union with the body. There are also examples (*exempla*) from the Old Testament that demonstrate how the Only-Begotten suffered through the ownership of the body, but remained outside the suffering as God.

The first of these images is found in Moses' confrontation with the Egyptians. In order to deliver the Israelites, God ordered Moses to perform a variety of miracles, such as the rod turning into a snake that we observed earlier. In this instance, he is told to "take water from the river and pour it upon the earth, and the water will be as blood upon the earth".⁸¹ The water is a sort of life, and corresponds to the Son, who is life by nature, flowing like a river from the Father. Just as the water was poured on the earth, so too did the Word come

⁷⁸ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:37.^{14ff}; PG 76:72BC). Cf. Genesis 28:11.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* Cf. Isaiah 28:16, Psalm 118:22.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Exodus 4:9.

to earth as a human person. The blood into which the water turned typifies that the Logos become flesh suffered a real death, even though he is in his own nature life. The correlative statement in this image is the Son as life and life-giver, as is the water taken from the river.

An intriguing analogy of Christ is a ceremony in the Levitical Law for the ceremonial purification of a leper who has been rid of his disease. The ritual called for the killing of a spotless bird in an earthenware vessel in running water. A second bird was to be washed in the blood of the first, and the blood then poured over the leper seven times, and he will then be considered clean. Christ is compared to these two birds, “not because there are two sons, but rather one from both things, humanity and divinity, gathered together in unity”. In addition,

The Word was alive even though his flesh was dead, and the passion was said to be common to them because of the union and the intimacy he had with the flesh. And so he himself indeed was alive, as God, but he made the body his very own, and thus intimately accepted in himself the sufferings of the body, while in his own nature he suffered nothing.⁸²

Therefore, although some actions of Christ are attributed to the divinity and others to the humanity—the passion, for example, is attributed to the humanity—Christ is still one person, and not two, just as there are two birds, but only one ritual. Both are necessary for the ceremony to purify the former leper, though only one dies. The death of Christ is directly attributable only to his humanity, though he is both divine and human. We know that this is a christological analogy because “the most precious blood of Christ, and the purification of sacred baptism, renders us clean and washes away the marks of defilement”.⁸³

The ability to search the Scripture for references to Christ is founded upon the belief that both testaments are a part of one continuous, though progressive revelation, the referent of which is the Incarnate Logos of God. As one is cognisant of what Scripture says about the Word, he is able to discover those images that illustrate the *mysterium Christi* cross-referencing components of the passage in question with statements made about the Logos elsewhere in Scripture. The basis for such a method of interpretation is the conception of two perspectives from which one can view the Old Testament, stemming from the two-fold purpose for its existence. In other words, because of

⁸² *Scholia* (PG 75:1406B). McGuckin’s translation.

⁸³ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1405C).

the revelatory purpose of Scripture, in which Christ is the referent, the interpreter can legitimately discover within particular texts analogies of the Incarnate Word, the complete self-revelation of God. We will now demonstrate the significance of such analogies to Cyril's christological expression.

Conclusion: The Force of Scriptural Images

Thus far we have seen that Cyril acknowledges that some Old Testament passages possess both a historical meaning and a spiritual one. The former is found by observing the text according to its historical, or literal, elements. This, of course, includes figures of speech, grammatical content, etc. The latter has Christ as its referent and is the result of the revelatory purpose of Scripture. One can find the spiritual meaning of a passage by cross-referencing components of the text with statements made about the Logos elsewhere in Scripture. We must now determine the extent to which Cyril intends his scriptural images to be media by which his christology is revealed to the reader. What force are they supposed to possess?

One initial observation must be made at this point: Cyril affirms the complete transcendence of God above creation. As a consequence, no one can know God without his initiative and self-disclosure. In addition, finite human minds are incapable of grasping the fullness of God, and our language woefully inadequate to express his essence and being. He is not to be captured with the words of humanity. Cyril is always mindful of the ineffability and transcendence of God. God is not creature, and he remains always above his creation.⁸⁴ Cyril recognises the inadequacies of analogies as well, commenting about his favourite image—body and soul, that it “falls short of the truth”.⁸⁵ About the image of fire and iron as an illustration of the Incarnation Cyril writes, “weak is the force of the illustration”, and says of analogies in general, “every force of illustration (παράδειγμα) is weak and falls short of the truth”.⁸⁶

However, human language is the only tool the theologian has at his disposal, and it must therefore be useful to some extent in explaining the mysteries of God, otherwise God would be wholly

⁸⁴ *Homilia Diversa* 2 (ACO 1.1.2:95.^{10ff}, PG 77:988C), *inter alia*. For this concept and its effects in Athanasius, see T. F. Torrance, ‘Hermeneutics of Athanasius’, 245-272.

⁸⁵ *Scholia* (PG 75:1376C).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1357C).

unknowable and theology would be a useless endeavour. The solution lay in the elevating of human language to the divine, rather than a lowering of the divine to the human. Our theological vocabulary must undergo a shift in meaning, to be understood in divine rather than human ways.⁸⁷ Cyril writes, “when we interpret divine things in human speech we are accustomed to understand the economy of an immortal nature through bodily types”.⁸⁸ This is what Young calls the sacrament of language.⁸⁹ Biblical and theological statements about God must be understood in light of their referent, rather than the usual manner of usage. At the same time, however, the terms we use to describe the divine must have their root in a contemporary understanding of their usage and meaning, otherwise there is no basis by which to extract their reference to God.⁹⁰ Human language, when taken up by God and used as a means of self-disclosure does reveal something of the reality of his being and activity, and is therefore accurate in that respect. God’s ineffability does not mean that we cannot know him, or that we are closed off from him. He has chosen to make himself known, and we are therefore able to know him through his self-revelation to us both in Scripture and in Christ, the ultimate referent of Scripture. Cyril’s use of scriptural images must be seen within this context.

Cyril considers the Incarnation a wholly divine act. Hence, it is ineffable, and is not a technical process such as synthesis, mixture, or fusion. Rather it is beyond the understanding and comprehension of human beings; it is “altogether ineffable (ἀπόρητος); known to no one at all, except God alone, who knows all”.⁹¹ The Word assumed humanity in a way that is ἀφράστος⁹² and ἀπερινοήτος.⁹³ These terms are used synonymously by Cyril with reference to that which is incomprehensible, ineffable, inconceivable, mysterious, inexpressible, and like sentiments. They mean that which is ὑπὲρ νοῦν καὶ λόγον.⁹⁴ After a lengthy description of the Incarnation he writes, “I will not deny that a true explanation greatly exceeds our speech, but this does

⁸⁷ *Adversus Julianum* (PG 76:713C).

⁸⁸ *Scholia* (PG 75:1399A).

⁸⁹ See Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 140-160.

⁹⁰ See T. F. Torrance, ‘The Logic and Analogic of Biblical and Theological Statements’ in *Divine Meaning*, 374-391.

⁹¹ *Scholia* (PG 75:1376C). See also, *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:27.4-5; PG 77:45C); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:33.5, 38.22; PG 76:60D, 73D); *QUSC* (PG 75:1357C, 1360A).

⁹² *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:26.27, 27.4; PG 77:45C); *QUSC* (PG 75:1269B).

⁹³ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:26.27; PG 77:45C); *QUSC* (PG 75:1292A).

⁹⁴ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:33.5, 46.41-42; PG 76:60D, 96B); *QUSC* (75:1360A).

not mean that the mystery of Christ is unbelievable, rather that it is all the more wonderful. So far as it is superior to all speech and understanding (*mente superius et sermone*), so it is all the more worthy of every admiration".⁹⁵ That God became a human person can be known, and indeed is the orthodox confession of faith. *How* God became a human person can neither be comprehended nor expressed; it is a divine act. The language of humanity is unable to explain the process by which it occurred. This is not to deny the reality of the Incarnation, as though because one cannot explain it, it must not be real. One can affirm that God truly became a human person for the redemption of humankind, but the intricacies of how it occurred are known only to God. It is a divine process and therefore is inexpressible.

There is no surprise in affirming the reality of something that cannot be understood or explained. There are many instances in which we know what has happened, but cannot discover how it did. The most obvious example is the union of soul and body to form one human person.⁹⁶ Who could possibly understand or explain the relationship of soul and body? No one can, it is beyond comprehension. Thus it is with the Incarnation: we know what happened, God became a human person, but we do not and can not know how it occurred. Cyril's point is that we do not have to be able to understand and explain the Incarnation to confess it a reality. There is no need to attempt a deeper investigation into the mode of union, when we are not even capable of comprehending it.⁹⁷ It is for this very reason that Cyril chastises Nestorius for defining the union as a *συνάφεια*, a technical mode of union. If one can explain the manner of the Incarnation, then how is it any longer ineffable?⁹⁸ Cyril recognised, however, that human vocabulary does not fully capture the fullness of God and his work, and must therefore be endlessly qualified. One set of qualifiers is, of course, the numerous analogies he uses from Scripture.

Cyril introduces a series of scriptural images by stating, *Εἰ δὲ χρῆ, καὶ τοῖς ἐκ τῆς θεοπνεύστου Γραφῆς παραδείγμασι κεχρημένους, καθάπερ ἐν τύποις τὸν τῆς ἐνώσεως καταδείξαι τρόπον, φέρε λέγωμεν*.⁹⁹ The inclusion of *εἰ χρῆ* does not imply reluctance on

⁹⁵ *QUSC* (PG 75:1308B).

⁹⁶ *Scholia* (PG 75:1376C); *QUSC* (PG 75:1292AB); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:33.⁹; PG 76:61A).

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:46.^{41ff}, PG 76:96B).

⁹⁹ *Scholia* (PG 75:1377D).

Cyril's part to employ these images, but indicates that one can confess the reality of the union of Godhead and humanity in Christ without them. In other words, they are useful in illustrating christology, but not necessary for its description. In other words, for Cyril, christology is properly articulated in biblical and Nicene statements and formulae. Analogies from Scripture, however, aid him in clarifying those formulae. Further, one should not infer from this that Cyril's use of scriptural images is insignificant for those investigating his christology. The numerous examples of their employment alone ought to demonstrate that an in-depth investigation into Cyril's christology requires an examination of his images. As we shall see, however, Cyril's statement that images are not necessary will enable us to determine more accurately the role that they have in his christology.

Scriptural images are analogical and not descriptive in nature. In addition to this, Cyril does not use these analogies as the source, or provider of his christological understanding. Rather than serving as the source of Cyril's christology they refer back to (ana-) something that is already known, and has already been stated. He says that Ἐμπεδοί δὲ πρὸς τοῦτο ἡμᾶς ἡ θεόπνευστος Γραγὴ, διὰ μυρίων μὲν ὅσων πραγμάτων τε καὶ λόγων. This is done through a myriad of παραδείματα.¹⁰⁰ He comments that in using these analogies he will "pass over the details [of the passage] to mention what *helps explain the mystery* [of Christ]".¹⁰¹ This implies that scriptural illustrations are to be used when the truth one is trying to provide information about is already known. The mystery has already been announced in numerous ways, and now images are employed to make the description of it more clear, and more easily understood. That is why Cyril says that scriptural language about God—including images—must be interpreted within the context of what is already known about the nature and activity of God.¹⁰² Even more illuminating is Cyril's comment that an illustration draws the one who chooses to believe the Holy Scriptures closer to the truth.¹⁰³ In other words, the truth about Christ that is contained in the apostolic preaching is clarified by the images and illustrations from the Old Testament. The purpose is to confirm to us what we already know, and by so doing to clarify and qualify what we believe.

¹⁰⁰ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:33.^{14ff}, PG 76:61A).

¹⁰¹ *Scholia* (PG 75:1405C). My emphasis.

¹⁰² *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:38.^{29ff}, PG 76:73D).

¹⁰³ *QUSC* (PG 75:1357D).

In each of the examples of scriptural images mentioned earlier this holds true. Cyril predicates orthodox belief about the person and work of Christ, then illustrates what he means with analogies. For example, in the first instance Cyril has already stated that the coming together of God and humanity in Christ ought to be understood as an *ἔνωσις καθ' ὑπόστασιν*. In other words, two unlike natures are joined together with one reality being the resultant. How is one to understand such a process? Cyril says it is like the coal of Isaiah, or the lily of Proverbs, or the pearl of great price. In each of these instances the resultant of uniting two unlike things is one reality. In addition, if either is removed the entire system breaks down. But Cyril never says, nor implies, that by reading the passage from Isaiah one could extract from it that Christ is one person from two natures. It is a fact that must first be known. The analogy then takes on the role of illustrating how this is so. This is true in the other scriptural images as well. The christological fact that they demonstrate is already known. It is for this reason that Cyril sees them as non-essential to his christology, though useful in clarifying and qualifying it. Moreover, this would explain the conspicuous absence of scriptural images in Cyril's christological correspondence. In this material he is concerned with stating his christology in the form of formulae that must be affirmed from proper faith. It is the confession of Christ as one person from two natures that is essential for orthodoxy. He sees no need to qualify these statements in his calls for Nestorius to confess such as true,¹⁰⁴ yet feels it important to do so in his treatises written to clarify what he believes.

However, scriptural analogies do correspond at least somewhat with reality, and are therefore more than mere similes. They indeed do point the mind towards the reality of the person and work of Christ. When Cyril uses these images he indicates that they are taken up and employed by "divinely inspired Scripture". For this reason they have Christ as their ultimate referent. Though not the source of christology, they are useful in illustrating it, as is readily seen each time a scriptural image is used. In the case of the coal, the wood that has been taken hold of by fire does not cease to be wood, but is instead considered one with it. This, Cyril says, is how one ought to consider Christ.¹⁰⁵ Christ is not fire and wood, but in the same manner as fire taking hold of wood results in coal, so does the Word of

¹⁰⁴ Whether or not Cyril intends to be vague is beyond the point.

¹⁰⁵ *Scholía* (PG 75:1377D); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:33.^{14ff.}, PG 76:61A).

God assuming humanity result in Christ. It therefore corresponds to the reality of the Incarnation not as a description or pattern, but as an illustration. Cyril's favourite term for describing these scriptural analogies is τύπος. A type is a person, event, or ordinance that reveals something of the truth of the Incarnation. Its purpose is to "lead us by the hand to the understanding of things above us".¹⁰⁶ The record of these events was not for posterity sake alone, or even only to guide behaviour, but they exist in Scripture in order to point to something else, in this case Christ.¹⁰⁷ Properly interpreting these analogies, says Cyril, is transforming them from types into truth.¹⁰⁸ By this he means that the exegete is to look beyond the obvious ιστορία to the inner θεωρία πνευματική, which is the truth about Christ. Their highest role is that of analogy; that is, pointers to the components of christology. Within the context of Cyril's christology they should be interpreted not as descriptive components, as are his formulae, but as images which invoke within the mind of the hearer insights into the reality of the person and work of Christ. What is already known about Christ—from subsequent biblical revelation and patristic interpretation of Scripture—is qualified and clarified in these types. In the hands of Cyril they become qualifiers of his christological formulae, both biblical and not, and we must recognise their qualitative character in order to extract from them the message they are intended to contain.

A final observation is that the images refer to only a particular component of Cyril's christology. As noted previously there are five themes Cyril illustrates with scriptural analogies. First, Christ is the result of a union of perfect Godhead and perfect humanity, and that the absence of either destroys the system. Second, the natures—divinity and humanity—are unconfused in the union. Third, God the Word remained fully God even in the Incarnate state. In other words, the Logos did not abandon his Godhead to become a human person, but was both perfect God and perfect humanity simultaneously. Fourth, the name Christ refers only to the Word in his incarnate state, as he was anointed according to his humanity and not his divinity. Finally, God the Word is the sole subject of the Incarnation. This means that he alone is the referent of all the actions and experiences of Christ. The Word is the one who walked on water and performed many miracles. Likewise, it is he who suffered in the flesh,

¹⁰⁶ Pusey I, 159:25.

¹⁰⁷ See Pusey I, 600:10ff; *De adoratione* (PG 68:137B, 140C); *Glaphyra* (PG 69:16A); *inter alia*.

¹⁰⁸ *De adoratione* (PG 68:140C).

while remaining impassible as God. This is significant, because no one image is a description of "the Incarnation" as a whole. Cyril does not implore one to observe a particular scriptural analogy and extract from it a complete christological system. Rather, he pieces together a number of different images each with a particular component of the Christ event which it illustrates. The two birds, for example, are not a pattern of the Incarnation, otherwise one would conclude that Christ was two rather than one. Instead, they illustrate how Christ is one individual—that is, God the Word—and how he [the Logos] suffered in the flesh.

Considering these observations, what can we conclude about Cyril's employment of scriptural images? First, that these images are not the source of christology. Otherwise they would be necessary for orthodox belief about Christ. Cyril does not extract from them his christological understanding, but employs them to illustrate what he believes. Also, these images are not descriptive of the Incarnation. Rather, they are analogous to particular elements of christology which have already been articulated in either biblical or theological formulae. Therefore, scriptural analogies are qualifications of Cyril's description of the Incarnation. This is significant for Cyrillian studies. Because his imagery is a qualification of his christology, as opposed to a description of the Incarnation, it is vital to a proper understanding of what he believes about the person and work of Christ. If we are to understand Cyril, we must understand his imagery.

There are three components to Cyril's christology. First is the christological idea, which is his conception of the various elements of the Christ event. This conception may or may not correspond to reality, but it is Cyril's belief about the Incarnation. Second is the christological description by which he expresses what he believes about Christ in various phrases and formulae. This description includes both biblical and theological statements which Cyril employs. The third component of Cyril's christological expression is the collection of scriptural images he uses as a part of his christological illustration, or qualification. In other words, the analogies he uses illustrate and qualify his *description* of the Incarnation rather than his *conception* of it. For this reason one must take great care not to push the images beyond their intended meaning, and press them into the role of description, a role they were never intended to fill. Although they "fall short of the truth", they are useful as qualifiers for Cyril's description of Christ. It also means that Cyril's *illustration* is a more important component of his christology than is usually recognised. One cannot gain an accurate understanding of Cyril's conception of the Incarnation through his description alone, but must also examine how he

qualifies and clarifies the formulae and statements he makes about it. It is futile to attempt an interpretation of his christology without exploring these analogies. When we come to interpreting his christology we will examine his images in this light. We will be sure to preserve the descriptive context within which Cyril uses these analogies. From the combination of his description of his christology and the imagery he uses to make it more clear, we hope to be able to paint a clearer picture of his understanding of the person and work of Christ.

CHAPTER THREE

IMAGES AND CYRIL'S USE OF PHILOSOPHY

In the previous chapter we were able to demonstrate that Cyril uses scriptural images to qualify his description of Christ, and that these images are analogical in character; that is, they refer the mind back to what is already known, and though they do point to the truth which they are intended to illustrate, they do so only partially. Now we come to those images with a philosophical, rather than scriptural source. Many of the analogies Cyril employs—not the least his favourite one—have a history in the philosophical discussions concerning the union of two bodies. We do not intend to infer from this that Cyril is to be associated with any particular philosophical school of thought.¹ Rather, because theological language is necessarily linked to the usual way in which the terminology is understood, but is also in need of ‘stretching’ in order to speak of a truth higher than normally understood by the vocabulary, this will also be true of his imagery. Therefore, one must comprehend the context from which the images were extracted to discover their “usual” meaning. However, this does not imply that Cyril’s christology is a “Christianised philosophy”, or vice versa. As we will see, the physical images he uses are analogies, and thus illustrate and qualify his christology, instead of being the source of his picture of Christ. We will also discover that the source of much misunderstanding of his christology can be traced to a misinterpretation of his “physical” images and vocabulary. They are not meant to define the union of God and man in Christ as a physical union, but one that is real and true.² As with our study of his scriptural images we will be developing the important foundation on which our investigation into his christology will be built.

The present images are found in the philosophers’ discussions of what happens when two bodies are joined. The predominant schools

¹ Although there is much similarity between Cyril’s thinking and that of the Neoplatonists, there is no necessary direct link. The most extensive work demonstrating the similarities is Siddals’ unpublished PhD thesis, *Logic and Christology in Cyril of Alexandria* (Cambridge, 1984). Cf. McCoy, “Philosophical Influences on the Doctrine of the Incarnation in Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria”.

² Cyril uses a number of terms to describe this including ἀλήθεια and φυσική. To these he opposes the term σκετική.

of thought each offered theories of union, and provided examples for their theories from natural phenomena. Cyril draws upon these examples to illustrate his doctrine of the Incarnation, especially how one ought to understand the union of divinity and humanity in Christ. Fundamental to these philosophical theories is an understanding of place (τόπος). How a philosophical school conceived of place determined its theories of union. Similarly, it is Cyril's conception of the Word's spatial relationship to the humanity which is evidence of the fact that his physical images are meant to be analogical, and should not be interpreted as christological descriptions, but as illustrations of his christological description

Concepts of Place

The first Greek writers to discuss the subject of place (τόπος) were the Pythagoreans. They were concerned with the separation of objects, especially numbers, the basis of their cosmological system. They considered place, or more accurately space, to be synonymous with the void (κένον) within which all things exist, and therefore the empty spaces between them. Aristotle says that they conceived of place "as constituting a kind of separation and division between things next to each other, its prime seat being numbers, since it is this void that delimits their nature".³ Place is that which is between things, but does not possess any active qualities. The later Pythagoreans, represented by Archytas, developed this theory a bit more. Simplicius quotes him as writing, "Since everything that is in motion is moved to some place, it is obvious that one has to grant priority to place, in which that which causes motion or is acted upon will be. Perhaps it is the first of all things, since all existing things are either in place or not without place".⁴ Place begins to develop a life of its own. It is more than merely a void, or empty space between bodies, but actually is thought by Archytas to contain bodies. There is a distinction between bodies and the place which they occupy. The "priority of place" is its existence prior to the entities contained within it. Still, place has no active qualities and no powers on its own to give shape to bodies, but is a mere receptacle in which things reside, from which and into which they move. We will observe this relationship between locomotion and place in more detail when we come to Aristotle.

³ Aristotle, *Physics*, 213b.23.

⁴ Simplicius, *In Aristotelis categorias commentarium*, 361:21-24.

The atomists Democritus and Leucippus also developed an early conception of place.⁵ For them, place was an infinite void (κένον) containing the atoms of which all matter is composed. Within the void the atoms collide with one another with no influence or resistance from the void. Like the Pythagoreans, they conceived of place as passive in nature, merely serving as the receptacle for bodies. Jammer says they conceived of place as "an empty extension without any influence on the motion of matter".⁶ Likewise, Lucretius the Epicurean says, "All nature is founded on two things: there are bodies and there is a void in which these bodies are placed, and through which they move about".⁷ Melissus advances this one step more by stating, "Nor is there anything void, for the void is nothing and that which is nothing cannot be".⁸ Place is developing into a "something" rather than being merely a "somewhere", that is, a void containing bodies. Jammer concludes that this is perhaps the first attempt at conceiving something to be real without it being a body.⁹

Initial theories of place were all concerned with the existence of a void (κένον) which was occupied by bodies, whether atoms or otherwise, but which was passive, exerting no influence on either the formation or movement of these bodies. Progressively, philosophers began to take seriously the possibility that place was real, though not corporeal, yet they continued to consider it to be passive in its relationship to the bodies it contains. The conception of place as a passive receptacle dominated early scientific thought. This left much room for advancement, and the three prominent philosophical schools made significant developments beyond these basic conceptions. Aristotle begins his discussion of place by stating, "The existence of place is held to be obvious from the fact of mutual replacement".¹⁰ This is the same reasoning we found in Archytas. He illustrates this with the movement of water from a jar. When the water is present in the vessel, it is said to be in a particular place. When the water is poured out it merely changes place, and is replaced by air, or some other substance. The jar is not destroyed by removing the water. Consequently, Aristotle concludes that the place of a body is something distinct from the body itself, and is therefore a real entity,

⁵ See Aristotle, *Physics*, 213a.30ff and *De caelo*, 111.2.300bff.

⁶ Jammer, *Concepts of Space* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), 11.

⁷ Lucretius, *De reorum natura*, 23.

⁸ Jammer, 11.

⁹ Jammer, 13.

¹⁰ *Physics*, 208b.1.

though not a body. In addition, he contends that every body that is sensible is in a τόπος.¹¹

He lists place within the category of quantity, whose members are either discrete or continuous.¹² After citing a few examples, he writes,

Place is a continuous quantity; for the parts of a solid occupy a certain place, and these have a common boundary. It follows that the parts of place, which are occupied by the parts of the solid, also have the same common boundary as the parts of the solid. Thus, not only time, but also place is a continuous quantity, for its parts have a common boundary.¹³

With this explanation Aristotle rejects the concept of place as a void that contains bodies, or the empty space between them. In addition, he also denies that there are gaps between a body and the place it occupies. The boundary of the body is the same as its place, and it is a continuous quantity. His examination of the topic in his *Physics* yields a number of insights into its characteristics. First, it has three dimensions, length, breadth, and depth.¹⁴ These are the dimensions by which all bodies are bound. Because place is that which surrounds bodies, it necessarily has the same dimensions. However, although it is three-dimensional, place is not a body, otherwise it would be in a place. Two bodies occupying the same place is an impossibility for Aristotle, as each body is thought to have its own place.¹⁵ Furthermore, because every body is in a place, the body and its place must be separate from one another.¹⁶ In addition, Aristotle denies that τόπος is an element or is composed of the elements.¹⁷ His reasoning for this is simple: the elements are themselves conceived as body; so if place were an element, and hence a body, “where would it be?”¹⁸ It would have to be in a place, requiring an infinite number of places, which is, of course, absurd in his mind. Place is also not the cause of anything, “neither in the sense of the matter of existence (for nothing is composed of it), nor as the form and definition of things, nor as end, nor does it move existents”.¹⁹ In other words, it is passive, neither creating, limiting, destroying, nor moving the body it contains.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹² *Categories*, 4b.20.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 5a.8-14.

¹⁴ *Physics*, 209a.5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

Finally, Aristotle writes, "Just as every body is in a place, so too every place has a body in it".²⁰ Were this not the case, a void would exist, the possibility of which he denies. There can not be a place that is empty, even if what occupies it is air.

This leads him to make four observations about τόπος: (1) it is the container of that of which it is the place, (2) it is no part of the thing which it contains, (3) it is neither less than nor greater than that which it contains, and (4) it can be left behind by the thing occupying it and is therefore separable.²¹ The definition of place, therefore, must be one of four possibilities. It is either the form of the body itself, the matter of which the body is composed, some sort of extension between the surrounding surfaces of the container, or the boundary of the container.²² He concludes that the first three options must be rejected. It can be neither the form nor the matter of the body itself, because they are a part of the body and cannot be separated from it.²³ Place is not a part of the body, but is separable from it, a fact evidenced by locomotion. Also, neither of these actually contains the body, which is the role of place.²⁴ The third option is rejected because, "there is no such extension".²⁵ What remains is that τόπος can only be the last of the four given possibilities: "the innermost boundary of the containing body".²⁶ Place is that which contains a body and, though it is coincident with it, is also separable from it. It is a vessel, or receptacle, which is transportable, but no part of the thing which it contains.²⁷ Place is the inner surface of an object's container. In other words, it is a receptacle holding a given body. Every body has a place, and every place contains a body. Hence, this is the *receptacle* notion of place.

In Stoic thought place took on a nature diametrically opposed to the Aristotelian view. Whereas Aristotle conceived of the universe as a series of containers (places), the Stoics held that it was a dynamic continuum. As we will see, this led to the conception of place as something internal to objects rather than external. The foundation for this view is the theory of *pneuma*. Alexander says that the entire

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 26.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 211a.1.

²² *Ibid.*, 211b.5.

²³ *Ibid.*, 209b.22; 211b.10.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 212a.1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 211b.18.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 212a.6, 20.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 212a.27.

Stoic system rested on this theory.²⁸ The ancient Greek world, including the Stoics, knew of four basic elements of the universe that were thought to comprise all bodies. These were air, fire, water, and earth. The Stoics attributed a quality to each element: cold, warm, moist, and dry, respectively. They regarded water and earth as passive in nature, and air and fire as active. Stoic *pneuma* was the product of the two active elements, fire and air.²⁹ This mixture formed an all-pervading plenum, filling the entire universe and all bodies within it. As a combination of the active ingredients, the *pneuma* was also considered to be active, which leads Sambursky to posit, “*pneuma*...became the active agent *par excellence* in their cosmos”.³⁰

This force is not only active within the universe, but is continuous throughout it. To illustrate this the Stoics cite three phenomena from everyday life. First is a puff of air. Aetius writes, “The Stoics say that the air is not composed of particles, but that it is a continuum which contains no empty space. If struck by a puff of breath it sets up circular waves which advance in a straight line to infinity, until all the surrounding air is affected, just as a pool is affected by a stone that strikes it”.³¹ A second example is that of sound. Diogenes Laertius records that the Stoics believed that one hears when the air between the body making the noise and the hearer is struck in spherical waves which impinge upon the ears, just as the waves in a pool expand when a stone is thrown into it.³² Likewise, the phenomenon of sight illustrates the continuous nature of the *pneuma* for the Stoics. Diogenes again writes, “The object seen is reported through stressed air, as if in contact with a stick”.³³ In other words, one sees an object because the eye and the object are connected with one another. All three examples show that the Stoics viewed the *pneuma* as one continuous entity which “was supposed to extend throughout the whole cosmos”.³⁴

The Stoic *pneuma* was not only active and continuous, but was also all-pervading. In other words, in contrast to the atomist view of the

²⁸ Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De mixtione*, 227.10. Alexander held a chair in Peripatetic philosophy at Athens in the late 2nd and early 3rd centuries AD (c. 198-209). His primary works were his commentaries on Aristotle. *De mixtione* is a treatise on the union of physical bodies, and centres on his criticism of Stoic κράσις. See *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York, 1967), I, 73.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 224.14f.

³⁰ S. Sambursky, *Physics of the Stoics* (London, 1959), 4. Cf. Galen, *De multitud.*, 3 (Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* II, 439, 440).

³¹ Aetius IV, 19.4 (Arnim, *SVF* II, 425).

³² Diogenes Laertius VII, 158

³³ *Ibid.*, 157. Cf. Aetius IV 15.3 (Arnim, *SVF* II, 866).

³⁴ *De mixtione*, 223.6ff.

universe as a void containing atoms that are separate from it and in constant motion within it, the Stoics conceived of the universe as the *pneuma* pervading unformed matter, or ὕλη.³⁵ An image for the mixture of *pneuma* and ὕλη, as recorded by Alexander of Aphrodisias, is that of the soul and body: "for there is nothing in the body which possesses the soul that does not partake of it".³⁶ In other words, the Stoics viewed the soul as entirely pervading the body in the same way that the *pneuma* pervades and mixes with all matter.

But what function did the Stoics perceive this active, all-pervading, and continuous mixture of air and fire to have in relation to matter? The first, and most basic function of *pneuma* is cohesion.³⁷ It serves to hold together the universe as a whole, and the bodies which exist within it. In opposition to Aristotle's conception of cohesion, which is an external, purely geometrical characteristic of coherent manner, and which Jammer makes analogous to samples in a box,³⁸ the Stoics conceived coherence as an inner function of the all-pervading *pneuma*. By penetrating matter this active force endows the entire universe with coherence. The Stoics thereby equated continuity of the *pneuma* with coherence, both of the universe in general and of the individual bodies composed of the ὕλη. Continuity is no longer a static concept founded on the relationship of a series of places, but a dynamic one in which the continuous *pneuma* is active in creating coherence. In the first place, then, the *pneuma* endows the universe and all bodies within it with τόνος, or tension. By the mutual cohesion of and continuity between all bodies in the universe through the function of τόνος, the Stoics could conceive of the mutual interaction of bodies, as witnessed in the examples mentioned previously. As Jammer has recognised, the Stoic theory that the cohesion of the universe is based upon the continuity of the *pneuma* turns the cosmos into one field of action.³⁹

The second function of the *pneuma* is based upon its all-pervading property. This affords the Stoics with a classification system to describe the ontology of material objects known as the four categories, though entirely unrelated to Aristotle's categories. Each category is a state of being in which a body can be found at a particular time. The first of these is that of being unformed matter, the ὕλη. At this point there are no physical qualities attributable to the matter. The next state is the endowment of physical properties by the all-pervading

³⁵ Simplicius, *De caelo*, 242.18; *De generatione*, 325a.29.

³⁶ *De mixtione*, 217.35.

³⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 223.6.

³⁸ Jammer, 24.

³⁹ Jammer, 23.

pneuma. Each quality consists of a particular mixture of the *pneuma*, determined by the proportion of air and fire therein. The proportionate mixture represents the third category, known as the *state* of the body. The final category is the sum total of all the *states*, or of all the *pneumata* permeating the body.⁴⁰ In other words, the *state* is each property, or proportion of *pneuma* within the body considered individually. The physical state, or *hexis*, is all the *pneumata* considered together. The Stoic understanding of *hexis* follows naturally from their concept of continuity. By permeating matter, and giving it cohesion, *pneuma* is most capable of performing the function of endowing the physical state. Thus, Chrysippus says that *pneuma* “is the cause for those bound into such a state of being endowed with a certain property which is called hardness in iron, solidity in stone, and brightness in silver”.⁴¹ The *hexis* of a body is formed by the *sympatheia* of the physical properties, which is interpenetrative rather than additive in nature. In other words, the *pneuma* penetrates matter and endows it with qualities, which are various proportions of the air-fire mixture (*pneumata*). It thus creates a total physical state (*hexis*) in which all *pneumata* participate in the entirety of the body. Illustrative of this is the effect on the entire body when one small part is injured; the experience of one part is intertwined with that of the whole. When one finger is smashed with a hammer the entire body experiences the pain. Therefore, *hexis* is described as the “coalescent and interlacing union” of the properties of the body.⁴² Sambursky summarises as follows: “The *pneuma* is the physical field which is the carrier of all specific properties of material bodies, and cohesion as such gets a more specific meaning by becoming *hexis*, the physical state of the body”.⁴³

This brings us round to the Stoic understanding of place. Whereas for Aristotle place was a receptacle in which a body rested, for the Stoics place became an inner tension resulting from the permeating nature of the *pneuma*, an active force generating cohesion in all material. In Stoic thought the universe was a continuum, rather than a series of “places”. As such, cohesion and physical properties were relative to the influence of the *pneuma* on the ὅλη. Consequently, the Stoics were able to conceive of place in a relational rather than a receptacle manner, in which not only the cohesion, but also the physical state of a body was the result of the all-pervading, continuous

⁴⁰ Plutarch, *De Stoic repugn.*, 1053f.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Sambursky, *Physics*, 7.

mixture of air and fire known as the *pneuma*. The place of a body was not a container, but its relationship with the *pneuma* and therefore to other bodies in the continuous universe. As we will see, this opens up the possibility of intriguing theories of physical union.

The Neoplatonists who discussed the concept of place seem to have synthesised much of what had already be said by both Aristotle and the Stoics.⁴⁴ Iamblicus is quoted by Simplicius as writing, "Every body is in a place".⁴⁵ The most significant characteristic of his view of place is his emphasis on the intimate union of place and matter, and the effects it has on the bodies that are in place. This has similarities to the Stoic understanding of the *pneuma*'s relationship to matter. In his commentary on Plato's *Timaeus* he writes, "Place came into existence naturally united with bodies and is never separate from their first entrance into existing things".⁴⁶ This is a rejection of Aristotle's view of place as something extrinsic to matter. It is the closeness of place and the body contained in it that is emphasised, rather than the distinction. Their intimacy and inseparability are the result of place not only encompassing bodies, but also penetrating and permeating them.⁴⁷ This natural unity means that place must be regarded as "linked to cause".⁴⁸ The cause to which he refers is the cohesion of individual bodies. Simplicius comments on this by stating, "One has to conceive of place not only as encompassing and establishing in itself the things existing in place, but as sustaining them by one single power. Regarded this way, place will not only encompass bodies from outside, but will fill them totally with a power which raises them up".⁴⁹ For Iamblicus place is an active power which bonds with matter not only to give them cohesion, but also to give them their shape and form.⁵⁰ This active force is the cause of the limit and shape of lifeless, formless matter through the dual relationship of encompassing and penetrating it. The cohesive nature of place represents a departure from the Aristotelian receptacle notion of place, and is similar in many respects to the Stoic theory of the all-pervading *pneuma*.

⁴⁴ For a fuller discussion of place in Neoplatonic thought, see S. Sambursky, *The Concept of Place in Late Neoplatonism* (Jerusalem, 1982).

⁴⁵ Simplicius, *Physics*, 639.24.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 640.7.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 639.35.

⁴⁹ Simplicius, *Categories*, 361.20ff.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 362.2.

Like Iamblicus before him, Proclus rejected Aristotle's notion of place as a receptacle. He observed that place must be one of four possibilities, the same four offered by Aristotle. He concluded that it can not be the form of the thing in place, nor the matter of the body, nor the boundary of the encompassing body, which was Aristotle's ultimate choice. Rather than a container, Proclus envisioned place as the extension between the boundaries of a body, a definition Aristotle had rejected.⁵¹ Simplicius writes that Proclus was one of few to call place a body.⁵² However, Proclus' statement needs clarification. He says that place is "an immobile, indivisible, immaterial body".⁵³ It must be immobile because mobile objects are by definition capable of locomotion, which means place would be moving from one place to another, an obvious absurdity. It must be indivisible because if place were to be divided there would be "another extension between the parts of the divided body that receives the dividing one, an extension in which the latter finds room and may be said to be in place, and this *ad infinitum*".⁵⁴ Place must be an immaterial body because all material objects are divisible, and it has been shown that place cannot be divisible. He then defines place in its simplest term: place is light. Because place is immaterial, it must be the most immaterial of all bodies. Light is the simplest of immaterial bodies, and therefore place must be light. Proclus envisions the universe as two equal, concentric circles. The first of these is matter, the second is light: "The whole material universe will thus be seen moving in its place in the immobile light".⁵⁵ Matter is moving about within the light, which both encompasses and permeates it. The penetrative light endows matter with cohesion, thus being its place.

Like the Neoplatonists before him, Damascius discarded Aristotle's container theory, opting instead to identify place with position and arrangement, in which matter is a passive, lifeless entity and the relationship between place and matter is causative.⁵⁶ Place determines, measures, and orders the position of matter, which is the cohesion of all bodies and their individual parts.⁵⁷ Simplicius says that for Damascius, "place is what makes the parts be joined together".⁵⁸ In

⁵¹ Simplicius, *Physics*, 611.30.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 611.11.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 612.25.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 628.2

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 625.10

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 626.30.

addition, if place is abolished, the position and arrangement of bodies will appear "unnatural and irregular, and carried into utter indeterminacy".⁵⁹ Simplicius also says, "he [Damascius] defines place not only as the measure of position, but also as that of magnitude".⁶⁰ It exceeds the idea of ordered arrangement alone, and is afforded the function of determining size and shape. Damascius says that place is "an outline of the position of the whole and of its parts and a matrix into which the body must fit".⁶¹ It is an active force, determining both the size and shape of bodies, and is a penetrative matrix, the inner extension of material objects. Once again we see a rejection of the receptacle notion of place that is replaced by a concept of an all-pervading force endowing bodies with cohesion, and thus serving as their τόπος. This is also a *relational* view of τόπος, as a body is in place as it is penetrated by an immaterial body, which Damascius considers to be light.

Concepts of Physical Union

The previous discussion was necessary in order to develop a foundation for understanding the context from which Cyril draws many of his analogies of the Incarnation—the philosophers' discussions of physical union. The two schools that propounded the most developed theories of union were the Aristotelian and Stoic. Aristotle's own writings reveal two concepts of physical union.⁶² His commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias also reviews Aristotle's theories of union in his *De mixtione*. The two types of union Aristotle recognises are composition (σύνθεσις) and mixture (μίξις, κράσις). The term μίξις is used of mixture in general, while κράσις refers to a particular type of μίξις in which liquids are united.⁶³ Alexander uses the first term to describe Aristotle's theory of mixture in general, and the second to describe the Stoic theory of blending.⁶⁴ A third theory that results in the increase (αύξησις) of one constituent and the destruction (φθόρα) of the other will be discussed as well.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 627.5.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 645.11.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶² See esp. *De generatione et corruptione*, *Physics*, and *De anima*.

⁶³ Cf. H. Joachim, 'Aristotle's Conception of Chemical Combination', *Journal of Philology* 29 (1903), 72-86.

⁶⁴ *De mixtione*, 228.26-27.

The two Aristotelian theories of physical union have a common, three-fold foundation. First, both σύνθεσις and μίξις/κρᾶσις consist of bodies that are “naturally independent substances”, otherwise there is obviously no union.⁶⁵ The components of any union “must originally have existed in separation”,⁶⁶ and have been independent of one another prior to the union. Second, the elements are not destroyed in either process of union. In a σύνθεσις the ingredients are merely juxtaposed and are easily perceived to remain unchanged. Likewise, in a μίξις/κρᾶσις, though the union appears to destroy the components they both remain. Aristotle explains it as follows: “Since some things that are, are potentially, and some actually, it is possible for things, after they have been mixed, in some way to be and not to be. Some other thing which comes to be from them is actually, while each of the things which were has not been destroyed but is potentially, rather than actually”.⁶⁷ Because the components each remain after the union, even if only potentially, the third common characteristic exists: the ingredients may theoretically be separated once again, returning to their original condition. The components “can again be separated out from the compound”.⁶⁸ Both types of physical union in Aristotelian thought (1) are formed from independent, and therefore different substances, (2) do not destroy the ingredients, and (3) can therefore be separated again into the original constituents. Let us now look more closely at these two theories.

Composition, although not widely discussed by Aristotle, must nevertheless be distinguished from mixture, as they each produce a different resultant. Alexander posits, “Among unions one type occurs by the juxtaposition and contact of substances, and we say that this occurs by σύνθεσις”.⁶⁹ One characteristic of juxtaposition is that it occurs only with constituents that are neither reciprocally active nor passive. The ingredients cannot act upon, nor be acted upon by another. They are said to be joined in that they are in constant contact with one another, and therefore one does not affect the other. In the union neither ingredient is altered by the other. Both Aristotle and Alexander cite as an example of σύνθεσις the union of barley and wheat. Aristotle says, “grains of barley are united with grains of wheat, when one grain of each is placed alongside one of the

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 228.12.

⁶⁶ Aristotle, *De generatione*, I.10.327b.22.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 22-25.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁶⁹ *De mixtione*, 228.30.

other".⁷⁰ Another example is given in his *Metaphysics*, where he claims that some things are united and therefore considered to be one unity "because they are continuous, such as a bundle being made one by a band, and pieces of wood made one by glue".⁷¹ One can easily see that a σύνθεσις produces no change or alteration in the ingredients, and that they are separable by simple means. A composition is an aggregate of the constituent parts, leaving the qualities and properties of them unaltered. The union takes place by surface contact and juxtaposition alone.

Aristotle begins his discussion of mixture in *De generatione* by enquiring, "what mixture (μίξις) is and what the resultant of a mixture (μικτόν) is, to which of the things that are it belongs, and how; furthermore, whether there is such a thing as mixture (μίξις), or whether this is false".⁷² Some philosophers, Aristotle acknowledges, define mixture as only σύνθεσις at the level of the smallest particles, a juxtaposition of the imperceptible parts of the ingredients, creating only the appearance of a real mixture. He denies this to be the case, stating that things cannot be divided into parts which are the smallest possible, because bodies are infinitely divisible. Consequently, μίξις is not the same thing as σύνθεσις.⁷³ They must be different processes. For Aristotle, the answer to the existence of μίξις as a process distinct from σύνθεσις lies in explaining how it takes place. Aristotelian mixture consists of two bodies "which are capable of acting and being acted upon".⁷⁴ In other words, the ingredients of a mixture must both be reciprocally active and passive. Moreover, in a μίξις the constituents are balanced in power and force.⁷⁵ For a mixture to occur each substance must be able to affect the other and be affected by it in a balanced manner. When these equally balanced substances are mixed, "each of them changes out of its own nature towards the dominant part of the other; yet neither becomes the other, but both become an intermediate with properties common to both".⁷⁶ The result of a μίξις is a *tertium quid*, which is neither of the constituents, but a compromise of each. Although they have changed in order to

⁷⁰ *De generatione*, 328a.2.

⁷¹ *Metaphysics*, 1016a.1-2.

⁷² *Op. cit.* 327a.32-34. For a more detailed investigation of Aristotle's conception of μίξις, see Joachim, *op. cit.*

⁷³ *De generatione*, 328a.6.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 29. Aristotle did discuss the bringing together of substances of unequal force, and such a process will be examined later.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

be united, they are not destroyed. They are no longer present actually, but neither of them is said to perish, for they are both present potentially.⁷⁷ The *tertium quid* that results from a mixture consists of the dominant properties of each ingredient. For example, if one were to mix a litre of water with a litre of wine the result would be neither water nor wine, but a vinous water or watery wine. Other examples of such a union are the elements—fire, air, water, and earth⁷⁸—and honey-water, which Aristotle contrasts with the juxtaposition of a bundle of sticks held together by a band.⁷⁹ The process of μίξις results in a new entity comprising the properties of the originals, which are not destroyed but are present potentially. A mixture, like a composition, is resolvable into its constituent parts. Dipping a sponge into a mixture of water and wine will dissolve it.⁸⁰

But what of ingredients of imbalanced powers? Do they form a σύνθεσις, or a μίξις, or neither? Both Aristotle and Alexander distinguish mixture from a combination of bodies with unequal powers of reciprocal action. Wolfson believes this is a subdivision of μίξις and terms it a union of predominance.⁸¹ Aristotle does not himself give this type of union a name, saying both that it is⁸² and that it is not a mixture.⁸³ He is most probably using mixture in a generic, non-technical sense when he affirms this type of combination to be one, as he directly contrasts μίξις and the union of ingredients of unequal powers in *De generatione*. In explaining what constitutes a mixture he says that when a small part of one ingredient is mixed with a large part of another, “they indeed do not give rise to mixing, but to increase (αύξησις) on the part of that which is dominant; for the other changes into the dominant one”.⁸⁴ This type of combination of ingredients cannot be a subdivision of μίξις, because in a mixture neither ingredient becomes the other. This is a significant distinction. The inferior ingredient is destroyed, leaving only the dominant one.

Aristotle chooses a number of natural phenomena to illustrate his theory of αύξησις. First is a drop of wine placed in ten thousand gallons of water. He contends that the drop of wine is not mixed with

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 327b.29.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 334b.18-30.

⁷⁹ *Metaphysics*, 1042b.18-19.

⁸⁰ Along with this statement there is no accompanying explanation as to *how* dipping a sponge into a water-wine mixture separates the constituents.

⁸¹ Wolfson, 379.

⁸² *De generatione*, 321b.1.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 328a.23.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

the water, but its form dissolves and it changes into the fullness of the water.⁸⁵ The reverse is also true. When a little water is combined with a larger volume of wine, the wine is the dominant ingredient. The resultant of such a combination is wine, not a μίξις of them both. The water is dissolved into the wine.⁸⁶ In other words, only the dominant ingredient survives, the inferior one is destroyed. If greater quantities of water are added to the wine, the powers eventually balance, and a μίξις results. However, if more water is added to the mixture, then eventually only water remains, and the wine perishes.⁸⁷ An αὔξησις is also seen in the combination of tin and bronze, in which the resultant is an increase in the bronze.⁸⁸ Finally, Aristotle illustrates his theory of αὔξησις with the example of combustible material being added to fire. He states, "Fire can be made in this way, by placing wood on top of an existing fire, and in this instance we have αὔξησις", that is, increase in the fire and a destruction of the combustible material.⁸⁹ The combustible material, like the inferior ingredient in the other examples, is changed into the dominant ingredient, in this instance fire. Each of these examples demonstrates that a combination of components of unequal ability to affect one another results in the destruction (φθόρα) of the lesser one and the increase (αὔξησις) of the greater one.

The interrelationship between Aristotle's theory of place and his concepts of physical union can readily be seen in the resultant of each process of union. In a σύνθεσις the components are juxtaposed, that is, they are in surface contact with one another. A μίξις results in a *tertium quid* that is neither one of the originals, but a compromise of each. These are the only options for a true union. The only other possibility is that one ingredient be destroyed while the other experiences an αὔξησις. It is Aristotle's receptacle notion of place that disallows other options, namely, that two bodies be in the same place without being changed. If it is true that each body has its own place, or container, and no other body can be within that container, then two bodies must be juxtaposed, or else be changed to some extent. The relationship between bodies is then determined by the relationship of their respective "places".

The Stoic theories of physical union, though similar to Aristotle's in many ways, are markedly different. Sambursky claims that "in

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 321a.33.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 322a.33.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 328b.8.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 322a.15.

several respects their theory of mixture goes beyond that of Aristotle”.⁹⁰ Justification for such a claim is found in the greater depth and clarity of the Stoic conceptions, which is ultimately aided by their theory of *pneuma*. It is because of their understanding of *pneuma*—the fundamental tenet of their cosmology—as permeating all matter that forced them to ponder frequently the question of mixture. Because the *pneuma* is a mixture of air and fire, and this mixture is said then to blend with all matter, theories of union are fundamental to their system. They conceived of three types of physical union. The first of these corresponds to Aristotle’s σύνθεσις, and is called παράθεσις. Chrysippus defined it as “two or more substances being composed into the same mass and juxtaposed with one another...with each of them preserving their own substance and quality...such as happens with beans and grains of wheat”.⁹¹ As we saw previously, this is the same example Aristotle gave for his σύνθεσις. The ingredients of a παράθεσις, like those of a σύνθεσις are not changed, but are only juxtaposed to one another. The second type of physical union conceived by the Stoics is σύγχυσις, or fusion. In this instance the original ingredients are both destroyed and a *tertium quid* is the result. Unlike an Aristotelian μίξις a Stoic σύγχυσις eliminates the properties of the original components, thus rendering re-separation impossible. Philo writes that fusion is the destruction of all the original distinctive qualities, such that it generates an entirely new substance, an in-between thing.⁹² Alexander describes Chrysippus’ concept of σύγχυσις as “both the substances and their qualities being destroyed...and the production of some other body from them”.⁹³ An example of such a union is the drug tetrapharmacon, which is a fusion of wax, fat, pitch, and resin. The ingredients are each destroyed, and a new, inseparable substance is the result of the process.⁹⁴

The most important type of Stoic union—to the Stoics, to their critics, and to the present study—is their concept of κρᾶσις, or blending. About this intriguing theory Alexander of Aphrodisias writes, “The third type of mixture he [Chrysippus] says occurs through certain substances and their qualities being mutually co-extended (ἀντιπαρεκτεινομένων) in their entirety while preserving their original

⁹⁰ *Physics of the Stoics*, 11.

⁹¹ *De mixtione*, 216.16-17.

⁹² Wolfson, 384.

⁹³ *De mixtione*, 216.18.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* Cf. Wolfson, 384.

substance and qualities in such a mixture".⁹⁵ Diogenes Laertius also records Chrysippus' theory of κρᾶσις, writing, "Blends are brought to be totally, as Chrysippus says in his third work on the *Physics*, and not according to contact and juxtaposition".⁹⁶ Blending is not simply παράθεσις of the smallest particles, but takes place "totally", or completely. There is a complete interpenetration of the components at every part. Alexander states, "There is no part of them (the ingredients) that does not partake of everything in such a product of mixture through κρᾶσις; otherwise the result would no longer be κρᾶσις but παράθεσις".⁹⁷

We can see from these descriptions first of all that the resultant of a κρᾶσις is a homogenous substance. Any volume of the blend is equally occupied by the properties of each of the original ingredients. Alexander writes, "no part of the blend (κρᾶσις) is unmixed with any of the bodies from which the blended product if formed".⁹⁸ As a total blend it is a homogenous union. Secondly, the original components are preserved in their entirety. This is no "potential" existence, but an actual one, in which the ingredients are neither altered nor destroyed. Alexander describes it this way: "each constituent maintains its own surface which it had even before the blend".⁹⁹ This reveals why the Aristotelian thinkers found Stoic κρᾶσις such an absurdity: their conceptions of union were founded on the receptacle notion of place that required each substance to have its own place, and therefore surface, as seen in this passage. He explains it in more detail: "certain bodies, two or even more, while being mutually co-extensive in all dimensions and totally mixed can themselves be preserved in their original character and retain their own qualities".¹⁰⁰ This was impossible for Alexander because Aristotelian theories of place and union did not allow for substances both to be fully mixed and to retain their respective properties. Moreover, a blend is separable into its original ingredients. Alexander records Chrysippus' claims of such.¹⁰¹ Unlike σύγχυσις, in which the united components are changed so as to generate a *tertium quid* that is not separable, the ingredients of a blend can be easily recovered. For example, a blend of water and wine can be resolved into the original components by use of a sponge.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 216.26.

⁹⁶ Diogenes Laertius, VII.151 (Arnim, *SVF* II.479).

⁹⁷ *De mixtione*, 217.12.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 215.10.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 213.3.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 220.27-28.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 213.7.

The Stoics listed a number of examples of a κράσις, including wine and water, soul and body, fire and iron, light and air, *inter alia*.¹⁰² About these examples Alexander writes, "Fire is not mixed with iron, as they say. For it is absurd to say that matter is mixed with fire; for everything that is burnt and heated by fire is the matter of fire, but, while the former is indestructible, the latter is not. Thus after remaining in the fire for a long time these bodies are too finally destroyed and expelled from their own form".¹⁰³ Likewise is the Stoics' use of wine blended with water rejected by Alexander.¹⁰⁴ Plutarch, Diogenes, and Alexander all report that the Stoics affirmed that one drop of wine was blended with the entire sea.¹⁰⁵ The only way this could happen, and indeed this is the basis for the theory of κράσις, is for there to be the total and complete interpenetration of substances, regardless of volume. In other words, it is not a comparison of strength which determines the nature of a union, as with Aristotle's theories, but another source. For the Stoics that source was the *pneuma*.

It will be remembered that the *pneuma* provided them with a continuous universe. This all-pervading substrate not only gave the cosmos and all matter therein cohesion, but also endowed unformed matter (ύλη) with physical properties. This idea of continuity and coherence by means of a pervasive, active force allowed them to conceive of a union in which the constituents were distributed homogeneously throughout the resultant. All matter is unified, the Stoics taught; therefore material objects can interpenetrate one another without either being destroyed or altered.¹⁰⁶ It is noteworthy that Alexander's rejection of Stoic κράσις is based upon his denial of the all-pervading *pneuma* and his affirmation instead of a receptacle notion of place.¹⁰⁷

There is basically one Neoplatonic conception which needs addressing at this point. Whereas the Stoics deemed it possible for two solid bodies to occupy the same place through mutual interpenetration, and the Aristotelians denied the possibility that any two bodies could occupy the same place, the Neoplatonists stand in what amounts to the middle ground. Two similarities exist between the

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 217.13ff.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 222.35ff.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ R. Todd, *Alexander of Aphrodisias on Stoic Physics: A Study of the De Mixtione with Preliminary Essays, Text, Translation and Commentary* (Leiden, 1976), 31.

¹⁰⁶ *De mixtione*, 216.1.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 223.1ff.

Stoic theory of *κρᾶσις* by interpenetration and the Neoplatonic concept of a penetrative mixture. First there is the penetration of the forces in space which defines place. One will recall that Iamblicus held that "the forces acting in space do not merely encompass bodies, but totally penetrate them".¹⁰⁸ Therefore, like the Stoic *pneuma* there is a force that penetrates all matter, and this defines place.

A second similarity is the total penetration of two bodies, something which Aristotle and Alexander denied. Syrianus writes, "The existence of two bodies together in the same place is not in all cases impossible".¹⁰⁹ He qualifies this by stating that one or both of the bodies must be an immaterial body. An example of such an interpenetration is two lights emitted from different lamps, which, when placed in the same room, "will have penetrated throughout the same chamber and gone through each other without being confused or divided".¹¹⁰ Proclus employs the same example when describing his definition of place and his theory of the penetration of a material body by an immaterial one.¹¹¹

Philosophical Influences on Cyril's Christological Imagery

Turning to Cyril's writings we find present a number of the examples used by the philosophers in their discussions about place and, more importantly, union. He employs them in his christology to illustrate various tenets of his picture of Christ. Of what use are these images to Cyril? We will discover that they are used in the same way as his scriptural analogies, and that they are recognised as being less than complete in their description of the Incarnation. The analogical nature of these illustrations means that they serve to qualify and clarify Cyril's christology. These include images dealing with fire, smell, and the body and soul of a man. Here we will review how these analogies were understood by the philosophers to devise a backdrop for the christological contexts in which Cyril chooses to use them. An examination of what he intends to say in these images follows.

Cyril's favourite analogy by far is that of the body and soul of a man. He uses it on more occasions than any other image to illustrate his christology. We saw previously that the Stoics conceived of the

¹⁰⁸ *The Concept of Place*, 16.

¹⁰⁹ Syrianus, *Metaphysics*, 84.28.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 85.25.

¹¹¹ Simplicius, *Physics*, 611.10-618.25.

relationship of body and soul as being an example of their theory of *κρᾶσις*, or interpenetration.¹¹² They believed the soul to be a corporeal substance which blends with the body entirely so that no part of the body does not partake of the soul. Yet, both body and soul retained their own properties and qualities, though they each shared in those of the other. Aristotle wrote an entire treatise *On the Soul*, in which he concluded that the soul and body are related as form is to matter.¹¹³ In other words, the body is the matter of the soul, and they are thus intrinsically related in that manner, not as through a union.

The largest portion of Nemesius of Emesa's work, *On the Nature of Man*, is concerned with the soul and its interrelationship with the body, and should be considered here. Nemesius records Plotinus as believing man to consist of soul, body, and mind, a view taken up, he says, by Apollinarius.¹¹⁴ He says that Aristotle conceived of a bipartite nature of man in which mind and soul are the same. Plato, he recalls, taught that the body is the instrument of the soul, as can be seen in death: in death the soul leaves behind the body just as a worker leaves behind his tools at the end of the day. The Stoics thought of the soul as a blending of the four elements, and therefore material and corporeal.¹¹⁵ Ammonius taught that the soul is what gives cohesion to the body, which is by nature mutable, dissolvable, and infinitely divisible. The soul cannot, therefore, be corporeal, otherwise what would hold it together?¹¹⁶ Cleanthes is recorded as believing that when the body becomes hurt or impassioned the soul suffers with the body and the body with the soul. For example, when the soul is embarrassed, the face blushes. Others teach that the body is the sole sufferer and that the soul remains impassible.¹¹⁷ The Stoics furthermore say that the soul permeates the entire body and is thereby joined to it. This cannot be, says Nemesius, because it would mean two bodies existing in the same place.¹¹⁸ How then is the soul regarded as one with the body put on it, and therefore man to be conceived of as one living being? Ammonius says the answer lies in the incorporeality of the soul, as incorporeal things are capable of union even with corporeal things, while remaining unconfused and yet inseparable. Although a

¹¹² *De mixtione*, 217.32ff.

¹¹³ *Op. cit.* Cf. *De mixtione*, 220.3-10; 222.35-223.5..

¹¹⁴ *Op. cit.* 1.1.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.2, 2.11.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.12.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.13.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* Thus revealing Nemesius' acceptance of an Aristotelian, receptacle view of place.

mixture usually produces a change in the ingredients, this is not so with incorporeal substances.¹¹⁹ The soul is life and is not altered through the union, but instead endows the body with life. Nemesius confirms this to be the case: the soul is united to the body without change to it.¹²⁰ In addition, the soul is present in every part of the body, though preserving its own being. The soul is incorporeal and thus not capable of being confined in a particular place, as a body is in a bag. Consequently, it is said to be in the body relationally rather than spatially or physically.¹²¹ Nemesius applies this analogy to the Incarnation, concluding that the Word is united to the flesh without confusion or circumscription in a particular "place".¹²² He is one with the body and soul of the assumed humanity, but remains God the Word, even as before the union.

This image is not only the favourite of Cyril, but of most other patristic writers as well. This has been documented in Gahbauer's *Das anthropologische Modell*.¹²³ Gregory of Nazianzus, in his anti-Apollinarian *Letter to Cledonius*, employs this analogy, stating that "God and man are two natures, in the same way that soul and body are, but there are not two Sons or two Gods".¹²⁴ Rather, there is one human being, comprised of a mixture (κρᾶσις), just as Christ is one individual.¹²⁵ Tertullian explains that the two *substantiae* or *naturae* in Christ are united in *una persona*, just as soul and body are in a human being.¹²⁶ Other patristic writers used the image in basically the same fashion, including Gregory of Nyssa, Apollinarius, and even Nestorius.¹²⁷

We see much the same in Cyril's use of this image. In his polemic against Nestorius' συνάφεια, he denies that the Incarnation is a mere juxtaposition of the Word and a man, but is instead a union (ἔνωσις) of Godhead and manhood with the resultant being Christ, who is one, single living being.¹²⁸ How does one illustrate such a union? One

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.20.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.21.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*, 3.22.

¹²³ F.R. Gahbauer, *Das anthropologische Modell: Ein Beitrag zur Christologie der Frühen Kirche bis Chalkedon* (Würzburg, 1984). Cf. Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Church Fathers*.

¹²⁴ *Ep.* 101 (PG 37:180A).

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* (PG 37:180AB).

¹²⁶ *Adv. Prax.* 27.

¹²⁷ *Antirrheticus* 2 (PG 45:1128B); L, *Fragment* 130, p.239; PG 83:216B; Loofs 331.¹⁻⁷.

¹²⁸ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:32.^{37ff}; PG 76:60Cff). A fuller discussion of Cyril's polemic against Nestorius follows in Chapter Four.

needs only to observe the union of body and soul in a man.¹²⁹ A man is a single living entity who is compounded from two unlike things—soul and body. If one were to kill a man, Cyril reasons, he would not be accused of killing two men. Why? Because although two things come together to compose a man, he is still regarded as one person, not two. So too is Christ compounded of two different natures—divinity and humanity—but should be confessed as one living being from these two.¹³⁰ Nestorius claims that the assumed, i.e., the man, is co-named God alongside the Word, who is God by nature.¹³¹ Is the body of a man co-named man alongside the soul? Such would be ignorant speech, Cyril maintains. Instead, man is the union of the body and the soul. To consider the Word separate from his own body after the union destroys the one Christ, just as separating body from soul destroys the one man.¹³² In explaining his christology to Succensus, Cyril writes that the two natures are united, and that there is only one Christ.¹³³ An illustration of such a phenomenon is our own composition, wherein body and soul unite to form one man. We perceive of the two natures, but we speak only of a single living being. Soul and body do not turn into one another to produce a man, and neither do the divinity and humanity turn into one another to form the one Christ; both components are complete and undiminished by the union.

The soul-body image also appears in Cyril's defence against Nestorius' attacks on the legitimacy of Θεοτόκος as an appellation for Mary, the mother of Jesus. Nestorius had rejected this title fearing that its use would lead to Mary being thought of as a goddess, and reasoned that it implied that she was mother of the Godhead.¹³⁴ He opted instead for Χριστοτόκος. Cyril rejects this thinking, claiming that it denies the divinity of Christ: if Mary, the mother of Christ, was not mother of God, then Christ was not God, he reasoned. He instead affirms the eternal existence of the Word and his generation from the Father from eternity; however, the Logos of God underwent a human birth and became man, that is, body and soul.¹³⁵ The mystery of the Incarnation of the Word is much like that of the birth of

¹²⁹ *QUSC* (PG 75:1292AB); *Scholia* (PG 75:1376C-1377C); and *Ep.* 46 (ACO 1.1.6:160.^{2ff}; PG 77:241BC).

¹³⁰ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:42.^{27ff}; PG 76:85AB).

¹³¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:52.²⁵⁻²⁹; PG 76:109C) (=Loofs 248.^{12, 13, 19-249.4}).

¹³² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:73.^{1ff}; PG 76:160D).

¹³³ *Ep.* 45 (ACO 1.1.6:154.²⁻³; PG 77:233A).

¹³⁴ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:15.^{7ff}; PG 77:21A-D).

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

any other man. The mother provides only the flesh, whereas God breathes into that body a soul which makes it a living being. Both body and soul are required to make a man, and therefore birth is a partnership between the mother and God. But the mother gives birth to both combined, which is one person and not two. Consequently, she is called the mother of the man rather than just mother of one part. She would not be called "flesh-mother" because her contribution was only the flesh, but mother of the one baby. Cyril says that "something like this happened in the birth of Emmanuel". The Word, though God himself and begotten of the Father from eternity, underwent a human birth and became a man like us. Therefore, the mother of Jesus is rightly called Θεοτόκος.

The relationship of body and soul in a man additionally illustrates how the sufferings of Christ are attributable to the Word, who in his own nature is impassible as God.¹³⁶ Cyril says that impassible suffering is not something that should surprise us, as we only need to look at the relationship of our body and soul to see an example of it. Although the soul is of a different nature than the flesh, and is separate from the passions and sufferings of it, they (passions and sufferings) are attributed to it.¹³⁷ In its own nature the soul suffers nothing, but is affected by the sufferings of the body impassibly. Take martyrs for example. Though only their bodies were killed, will not their souls also receive the rewards from Christ? When the body dies we say that it is the death of the man, and not the death of his body alone.¹³⁸ Likewise, the sufferings of Christ experienced in the flesh are rightly attributed to the Word, though he experiences them impassibly. The body suffered and died, but it is said to be *his* suffering and death.

Similarly, that the Word works miracles through his own flesh is illustrated by the analogy of body and soul.¹³⁹ We can observe this in the case of a carpenter, whose soul performs particular tasks with the aid of the body. No one would say that the work belongs to the soul or the body alone, separated from one another, but to both combined, that is, the one carpenter. Before becoming man the Word performed his acts in his own nature, but after the Incarnation he does so by means of the body that he fashioned for himself.

¹³⁶ *Scholía* (PG 75:1404D-1405C); *Ep.* 46 (ACO 1.1.6:161.^{26ff}, PG 77:245A).

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1405AB, 1377AB).

¹³⁸ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:22.^{1ff}, PG 77:36CD).

¹³⁹ *Answers to Tiberius* (W 162.12ff).

A second image that appears in Cyril's christology is that of the mixture (κρᾶσις) of wine and water.¹⁴⁰ It will be remembered that this image appeared in the discussions of both the Aristotelians and the Stoics. For Aristotle, this image was an example of both μίξις and ἄλλησις. If the water and wine were about equal in volume, then a μίξις occurred, which resulted in a *tertium quid*, a compromise of the properties of the water and wine. If either of the liquids were of a significantly greater volume, say, a cup of water and ten thousand gallons of wine, then an ἄλλησις resulted. In this case, the water would be destroyed and turned into wine. For the Stoics a combination of water and wine, regardless of volume, was a κρᾶσις. They believed that in such a process the two ingredients penetrated one another and retained their own distinctive properties. In contrast to Aristotle and Alexander, the Stoics denied the destruction or alteration of either the water or the wine in a combination of this sort.

Gregory of Nyssa, writing against Apollinarius, states that the assumed humanity and the Word are joined in a κρᾶσις like a "drop of vinegar in the endless sea".¹⁴¹ Apollinarius argues that the mixture of water and wine illustrates the union of the Word and humanity in Christ, but that in such a mixture there is no change in or diminishing of the constituent elements. Coming to Cyril, we find the image in his denial of the accusation that his christology teaches the confusion (κρᾶσις) of the Word and the humanity, resulting in Christ being a *tertium quid*, and as such less than both complete God and complete man.¹⁴² He acknowledges that some of the orthodox Fathers used to term κρᾶσις as a description of the union of God and man in Christ. He maintains that their intention was to attempt to express the intimacy of the union, rather than to propound some sort of fusion of the natures in which they either could be altered or destroyed. Their use was non-technical, and should not be interpreted to be unorthodox. As a defence he reminds his readers that Scripture also used the term this way, saying that men would be united (κρᾶσις) in spirit, and not undergo a fusion of persons.¹⁴³

An even more important image used by Cyril is that of fire. There are several analogies which he employs that contain the element of

¹⁴⁰ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:22.^{7ff}; PG 76:33CD).

¹⁴¹ *Adv. Apollinarem* (PG 45:1276CD).

¹⁴² *Ibid.* A fuller discussion of confusion and Cyril's denial of it follows in Chapter Five.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

fire.¹⁴⁴ Fire was also popular with the philosophers. We have seen that, like the previous two images, it was a topic of discussion for both the Aristotelian and Stoic schools. There are essentially three characteristics of fire basic both to the philosophers' discussions and to Cyril's christology: fire and its inherent heat, fire's effects on a combustible material, and fire's effects on a metal such as iron. Aristotle says that heat is inherent to fire, and does not exist separate from it, though the heat does affect other things.¹⁴⁵ We first see the effects of fire on a combustible material, such as wood. In such a case there is said to be an increase (αύξησις) in the fire by turning the wood into fire, and thereby destroying it.¹⁴⁶ A mixture (μίξις) does not take place, but an αύξησις of the fire and a destruction (φθόρα) of the combustible substance.¹⁴⁷ In other words, the matter of fire, which is the wood, is the fuel, and is used up in the process of combustion.¹⁴⁸ Aristotle's student Theophrastus produced an entire work on fire, in which he contends that wood and other combustible materials are the fuel of fire and are destroyed when set aflame.¹⁴⁹ In addition, once the fuel is taken away, the fire is extinguished, as it must have this fuel to exist.¹⁵⁰ Regarding the union of fire and a metal such as iron, Theophrastus says that the metal is capable of retaining the heat from the fire for a considerable amount of time, but that eventually it too is destroyed by the union.¹⁵¹ Similarly, Alexander says that the heat which iron possesses when it is put into a fire is a quality of the iron, rather than the result of a μίξις or κράσις, as the Stoic claim.¹⁵² Instead, the iron, just like wood, is the matter of fire, and is thus its fuel. When it remains in the flame for an extended period of time it too is destroyed.¹⁵³

In contrast, the Stoics theory about fire was concerned most of all with their theory of the *pneuma*. Just as the *pneuma*, a mixture of fire and air, penetrated and permeated all matter, so was fire able to

¹⁴⁴ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:33.^{17ff}, 84.^{23ff}, PG 76:61A-64B, 189D); *Scholia* (PG 75:1377D-1380B); *QUSC* (PG 75:1293A; 1357CD; 1360D).

¹⁴⁵ *De generatione*, 324b.19ff.

¹⁴⁶ *De generatione*, 322a.15.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 327b.11.

¹⁴⁸ *De generatione*, 51; *De mixtione*, 222.35ff.

¹⁴⁹ *De Igne: A post-Aristotelian View of the Nature of Fire*, ed. and trans. V. Coutant (Assen, 1971), 20, 63, 75.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 4, 20.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁵² *De mixtione*, 220.3ff.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 222.35ff.

penetrate that which it came into contact with. Fire is said to pass completely though iron, with each of them retaining their respective properties.¹⁵⁴ Rather than destroying the iron or wood, it blends (κρᾶσις) with it. It is a mutual interpenetration, however, in which both are said to share their properties with the other, which may explain why the substance is eventually turned to ashes, though we are not told so by the Stoics. We can assume, however, that this is something other than an ἀύξησις of the fire and a φθόρα of the wood or iron.

Cyril uses fire within the contexts of his discussions about the nature of the union of the Word and manhood, the effects of the union on the manhood, and the sufferings of Christ. In the first instance he is explaining how a piece of burning coal illustrates that Christ is one from two unlike natures.¹⁵⁵ He says that the fire penetrates and changes the wood into its own glory and might, though they both remain what they were previously. Cyril's point is not that the humanity was destroyed by the union, but that just as a burning coal is considered one from two, so is Christ. In fact, he employs the analogy of the burning bush to illustrate that although fire normally consumes trees, in this case it did not. The explanation is that God did what was supernatural, as nothing is impossible for him.¹⁵⁶ The relationship between the Word and his body ought not to be interpreted as analogous to fire heating up something else.¹⁵⁷ When a body is warmed by a fire, it experiences the fire only externally. To say of Christ that the body was related to the Word externally is to divide him, and thus to destroy the union. An analogy used similarly is that of fragrance.¹⁵⁸ Fragrance is an inherent property of a flower, and heat is an inherent property of fire. There is no such thing as a flower without fragrance, nor fire without heat. This is analogous to the relationship between the Word and his body; Christ is the resultant of each, and without either of the constituents, the system is void. The point is not that a flower or a fire is a description or pattern of the Incarnation, but these images illustrate that the Word, who is incorporeal, is intrinsically linked to his body, just as the fragrance of a flower is linked to the stem and petals of the flower.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 217.13ff; 222.35ff.

¹⁵⁵ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:33.¹⁷ff; PG 76:61AB), *Scholia* (PG 75:1377D-1380B).

¹⁵⁶ *QU/SC* (PG 75:1293A).

¹⁵⁷ *Scholia* (PG 75:1398B).

¹⁵⁸ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:33.³⁹ff; PG 76:61D), *Scholia* (PG 75:1380C).

Cyril also employs fire to illustrate that the Word, by making the body his own rather than that of another man, empowers it with the ability to give life. For example, when water is heated by fire, it is made hot, though by nature it is cold.¹⁵⁹ It is in this same way that the Word made his flesh life-giving. He did so without fusing together himself and his body, but by making the body his own.¹⁶⁰ The analogy is not intended to demonstrate the union, but the life-giving properties of the flesh, as given to it by the Word, whose flesh is rightfully is. To say that the flesh was that of another man, and therefore not infused with the life-giving qualities of the Word himself, would mean that the Eucharist is nothing more than cannibalism.¹⁶¹

The last fire image is that of fire and iron.¹⁶² When fire comes into contact with iron, or another piece of metal, the iron is heated. If this heated iron is struck, it is affected directly, i.e., it changes shape because of being hit. The fire, though, is said to be affected only indirectly, as a result of its union with the iron. This illustrates that when the body of Christ suffered, it did so directly, while God the Word suffered only indirectly. Cyril is not using this as an analogy of the union, but of how one ought to understand the impassible suffering of the Word become man. One can see that he is not describing the Incarnation as a union of fire and iron, but is explaining how the Word can be said to suffer in the flesh while remaining the impassible and immutable Logos of God.

Origen uses the image of fire and iron to illustrate how the rational soul of Christ, through its union with the Word, was made incapable of sinning. If a piece of iron is placed within a fire, it will eventually be converted into the fire.¹⁶³ Apollinarius states,

If the mixture [of fire] with iron, which makes the iron itself fire, so that it performs the work of fire, does not change the nature of the iron, then too the union of God with the body implies no change of the body, even though the body extends its divine energies to those who are able to come within its reach.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:84.^{23ff}, PG 76:189D).

¹⁶⁰ *QUSC* (PG 75: 1360D).

¹⁶¹ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:84.²³, PG 76:189D).

¹⁶² *QUSC* (PG 75:1357CD).

¹⁶³ *De Principiis* II.6.6.

¹⁶⁴ *L. Frag.* 128, p. 238. As cited and translated in Wolfson, 435.

Conclusion: The Force of Physical Images

From what we have observed in this chapter we can conclude that Cyril does not use these 'physical' images in a technically 'physical' manner. The Incarnation is a Divine, and therefore ineffable, act and cannot be explained by means of human descriptions. We covered the inexplicable nature of the mystery of Christ in the previous chapter, and it will suffice to be reminded here that Cyril recognises that even his Scriptural images cannot express the union of divinity and humanity adequately. As with analogies from Divine Scripture, if images are descriptions, then the Incarnation is no longer ineffable.

In addition, Cyril's physical imagery must not be removed from within the context of the spatial relationship between the Word and the body. One will recall that essentially three theories of place existed in antiquity. The first was that the universe was a series of receptacles, each containing a body and every body contained in a place. The container, or receptacle view of place denied that two things could exist in the same place. This was the Aristotelian view. The second view, that of the Stoics, taught that the universe was a continuum, an all-pervasive *pneuma* which endowed the universe and matter within it with cohesion, and transformed ὅλη into particular bodies with individual characteristics. Place was then defined by the *pneuma* rather than by volume or bulk. The Neoplatonists viewed place as a combination of the Aristotelian and Stoic views. Their conception was that place was indeed a receptacle, but only for corporeal objects. Consequently, they agreed with the Stoics with regard to incorporeal entities being in the same place by means of interpenetration, but denied such for corporeal bodies. Writing within this scientific culture, Cyril asks what Emmanuel is to mean, how is "God with us"?¹⁶⁵ He maintains that it does not mean that he is with us in any localised sense, because God is not in a particular place. How can he be, since he fills all things? Rather, it applies to that fact that he became as we are, coming into our time and place yet not being subject to it as the Word. Had he been confined to the body and said to be spatially present with us, then he would have left heaven empty of his Godhead, which he certainly did not do.¹⁶⁶ When Scripture says that he descended to us, it means that he became man, not that he experienced some sort of locomotion.¹⁶⁷ Movement from one

¹⁶⁵ *Scholia* (PG 75:1371C-1373A).

¹⁶⁶ *Answers to Tiberius* (W 146.12ff).

¹⁶⁷ *Scholia* (PG 75:1374AB); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:20.^{14ff}, 38.^{3ff}; PG 76:29C-32B, 73A-D).

place to another is impossible for God because he fills all things. What type of spatial descent would he need?¹⁶⁸ In addition, in his analogy of the fragrance and flower, among other places, he indicates that the Word is incorporeal, and therefore not subject to spatial confines.¹⁶⁹ This is strikingly similar to the Neoplatonic conception of place, in which incorporeal entities are unbounded, and are therefore capable of penetrating corporeal bodies. Cyril sees the spatial relationship between the Word and flesh as being unlike either the receptacle or *pneumatic* conceptions of place. Rather, it surpasses description by either one, as it is an ineffable, divine union. In addition, we observe that he is not looking for a technical notion of place by which to explain the Incarnation. After all, the question he is asking is not how it happened, but how we can better understand the inexpressible. He therefore employs a Neoplatonic view of place to *illustrate* what happened, but never to serve as a description of it. In other words, the Word is not just some incorporeal being penetrating a corporeal one, but is God ineffably uniting his own body and soul to himself.

A further observation is that Cyril's non-technical use of physical images should be read into his use of physical terms as well. For example, the word φύσις bore a number of related meanings in the ancient world.¹⁷⁰ First, it meant the cumulative properties of a thing that made it what it was. This was this older usage and was used by Cyril in reference to, for instance, the human and divine natures (φύσεις) which comprised Christ. The second, later usage is the manner of speech which caused the greatest controversy between Cyril and the Antiochenes, especially Nestorius. When used this way the term connotes an independent existent. In the light of this it is easy to see why Cyril would object to speaking of two φύσεις after the union, and why Nestorius would reject the Alexandrian's ἕνωσις κατὰ φύσιν and μία φύσις, claiming them to be Apollinarian.¹⁷¹ Therefore, when Cyril says that the Incarnation is "natural union" or that there is "One nature of God the Word Incarnate", he means that the union is real and genuine, as opposed to external, and that there is one independent existent in Christ, that is, God the Word become flesh. The same is true of his 'physical' analogies. When he attempts to illustrate his christology using physical processes and material images,

¹⁶⁸ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:67.^{8ff.}, PG 76:145D).

¹⁶⁹ *Scholia* (PG 75:1380C).

¹⁷⁰ Cf. McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 138ff.

¹⁷¹ The following two chapters address both sides of the issue.

he does not use them in a physical manner, but in a non-technical and therefore illustrative way. For example, when he employs his body-soul analogy, he is not implying that the Logos is the soul and the humanity is the body. Rather, he means to say that the union of Word and man in Christ is illustrated by the union of soul and body in a man. This can be seen in his other physical images as well. The Incarnation is not a *μίξις, κρᾶσις*, or any other technical process, but is the ineffable union of God the Word and man.

Because the Incarnation is inexplicable, and because these images are used non-technically, they are unable to explain fully the truth of what they are intended to illustrate. Even the analogy of body and soul falls short of the truth.¹⁷² The image of fire and iron to illustrate the impassible suffering and death of Christ is weak, and also falls short of the truth.¹⁷³ Just as with Scriptural images, those taken from nature should be interpreted in the light of the ineffability of God and the necessity of using human language to reveal something of the truth concerning him. By acknowledging that physical images are weak and fall short of the truth, Cyril is implying that they are used analogically. In each instance, he employs these images to illustrate a particular component of his description of Christ. One does not find within them a revelation of the Incarnation, nor even a description thereof. Rather, they serve the important purpose of qualifying Cyril's christology, and are therefore analogical in character. This means that they are not descriptions or patterns of the *mysterium Christi*, but rather illustrations of it. Cyril rejects *σύνθεσις*, *μίξις*, and *κρᾶσις* as proper descriptions of the union of Godhead and manhood in Christ.¹⁷⁴ We can then conclude that when he uses these images he does so in a non-technical manner. A technical process cannot explain the Incarnation. Otherwise, they would explain the unexplainable, and make known that which is beyond knowledge. They must be interpreted as analogies and not be pressed beyond their intended meaning.

The previous two chapters have made strides in preparing us to reconstruct Cyril's christology. Firstly, we have seen that the images he draws from Scripture are not seen as the source of his christology, but illustrations of it. He does not propound that one could read about the instruction for ceremonial cleansing of a healed leper and dis-

¹⁷² *Scholia* (PG 75:1376C).

¹⁷³ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1357C).

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1376C). See also *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:33.^{2ff}, 38.^{26ff}; PG 76:60D, 73D); *QUSC* (PG 75:1357C, 1360A).

cover within it that God the Word suffered impassibly through the flesh. He does believe, however, that when explaining what one means by impassible suffering this passage, and others like it, become useful to the Christian theologian. This type of christological exegesis is founded on his understanding of the Old Testament as the initial revelation of God which finds its ultimate consummation in the person of the Word of God become man. Secondly, we have examined Cyril's use of 'physical' images from philosophy and concluded that they are not used by him in a technical fashion. Rather, they seek to make more clear what has been said already, and are, like Scriptural images, analogical and illustrative in nature. Their contemporary and natural meaning is important, as it brings to light why the images are analogous to various components of his christology, but they should be stretched and understood in the light of the description given, rather than stand-alone descriptions *in se*.

What is it that he really believes about the *mysterium Christi*? The only way to discover the answer is to examine what he says about it. This is his description of the Incarnation. Included here are his formulae and phrases taken from Scripture and passed down from the orthodox Fathers, along with his own descriptions of Christ. Finally, he needs to clarify what he has said, and he does this by means of illustration. Here is where the images come into his christology. Once Cyril has made a christological statement, i.e., stated some component of the Incarnation, he seeks to illustrate that statement, and not the components of the Incarnation *per se*. In other words, the images Cyril employs refer to his christological statement, rather than his conception of the Incarnation. For example, he says that the Word became man through an ἔνωσις καθ' ὑπόστασιν. How is one to understand such a union? It is illustrated, Cyril says, by the union of body and soul in man. The body-soul image does not have as its referent the process of Incarnation, but the concept of ἔνωσις, which is itself a description of the way in which Cyril conceives of God the Logos becoming man. Yet, even the analogy does not fully capture the truth of what an ἔνωσις καθ' ὑπόστασιν is, but is only a tool to qualify it. In the following chapters we will seek to employ this same three-fold process in interpreting what Cyril rejects and what he affirms about Christ by examining his description and how he illustrates that description, ultimately reconstructing what he believed about the Word's becoming man for the redemption of mankind.

PART TWO

CYRIL AND CHRISTOLOGICAL HERESIES

CHAPTER FOUR
ADVERSUS NESTORIUM

In Part One, we set out to place Cyril's images within their Scriptural, philosophical, and christological contexts. In addition, we sought to address the question of the intended force of these images. That is, we wanted to determine how far the analogies were meant to go in illustrating his christology. Having discussed these issues, we will now begin to explore the theological arguments he wishes to make in and through his analogies. We will investigate those analogies which do not find their way into his collection of appropriate and helpful christological images, but are a part of his polemic against Nestorius and Apollinarius. This requires that we discover why the descriptions of Christ associated with these analogies are unacceptable to Cyril.

Paragraph eight of Cyril's *Scholia de Incarnatione Unigeniti* begins a lengthy discussion of what he confesses the union (ἔνωσις) of divinity and humanity in Christ to be.¹ He states that there are a variety of processes by which two things are brought together into a ἔνωσις. These include παράθεσις, μίξις, and κρᾶσις. None of these processes, however, describes the union of God and humanity in Christ.² Rather, the Incarnation is ineffable (ἀπόρητος), known only to God. No one can explain how God became a human being. Cyril even chastises Nestorius for claiming, at least in Cyril's interpretation of him, to explain the union entirely with his idea of συνάφεια.³ He reasons that if his opponent can explain fully the means by which Christ was fashioned, then it is no longer an ineffable act of God. As we have seen, human language can point the mind toward the ineffable, but cannot describe it fully. We can assume, then, that Cyril claims to *illustrate* the mystery, while he understands Nestorius as claiming to *explain* how it happened. Cyril recognises that the mode of union in the Incarnation is beyond human cognisance, and is thus incapable of complete description. In contrast, he sets out in two stages to express how one is to understand the ἔνωσις.

The first stage is that of christological description, in which he employs numerous formulae to articulate his understanding of the

¹ *Op. cit.* (PG 75:1376C).

² *Ibid.*

³ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:47.²⁻³; PG 76:96B).

mysterium Christi. These formulae include especially his collection of verbal nouns, such as “becoming a human being”, “emptying himself”, and “taking on the form of a slave”, along with others. The second stage is the clarification of these christological statements. For this task Cyril employs his many Scriptural and “physical” images. These analogies are intended, as we have seen, to qualify the descriptive phrases and formulae he has previously applied to the Incarnation. He acknowledges that these are merely signposts, which point to the reality of the event but are incomplete and limited even in their ability to illustrate. Although they are founded upon the truth of what they demonstrate, they do not serve as one-to-one descriptions of it. They provide an important service in Cyril’s christology: they enable the finite human mind to comprehend something of the ineffable. The things of God can never be grasped fully by man, but they can be understood better with imagery than without. For that reason, it is vital that we investigate Cyril’s use of analogies both in his rejection of heresy and in his own description of the Incarnation. In so doing we will understand better the formulae he regularly employs. How he describes what is a proper picture of Christ and what is an improper one must be seen in the light of how he illustrates, and thereby qualifies, those descriptions. Otherwise, the interpreter is facing a formidable task with only part of the essential tools.

What then is to be said about Cyril’s rejection of these three modes of union—*παράθεσις*, *μίξις*, and *κρᾶσις*? Is it that Cyril cannot use these terms to illustrate or designate the union, or is there something inherent within them that he rejects? In Part Two we will examine Cyril’s objection to these modes of union to determine why he considers them insufficient to describe the Incarnation.

The first term in the list, it will be remembered, was the term of choice for the Stoics to describe a union by juxtaposition. Aristotle also considered juxtaposition a type of union. This process, for both the Stoics and the Aristotelians, does not result in any change in the two constituents, but neither does it generate a true union (*ἕνωσις ἀληθής*). Instead, the ingredients are merely tangentially united, with no reciprocal action between them. An illustration of this type of combination, used by both schools of thought, was beans and wheat. There is no true union of the two; there is merely an aggregate of the components. The terms *μίξις* and *κρᾶσις* were used almost interchangeably by Aristotle to describe a union in which the two ingredients are altered. The resultant is a *tertium quid*. Technically, a *κρᾶσις* is a subdivision of a *μίξις* and refers specifically to a mixture of liquids. For the Stoics *κρᾶσις* was a complete mutual interpenetration of the ingredients such that neither was altered but the resultant was

what they called a true mixture of them. The Aristotelians rejected such a notion. As we will discover, Cyril perceived in Nestorius an attempt to describe the union of humanity and divinity in Christ as a juxtaposition, which necessitated the affirmation of God the Word being connected externally to an ordinary human being, held together merely by the good-will of God. In contrast, Nestorius accused Cyril of describing the Incarnation as a *μίξις* or *κράσις* in which either the Word or the man, or both, were altered. The result of Cyril's christology, in Nestorius' mind, is a Christ who is a *tertium quid*, neither fully God nor fully man. He gives to this charge the label of Apollinarianism. Cyril explicitly rejected this accusation. In the next two chapters, we will see why Cyril rejected juxtaposition and mixture as appropriate conceptions of the union of God and man in Christ. Once we have seen what Cyril denies to be the proper picture of Christ we can begin to construct the picture he himself paints of the *mysterium Christi*.

In this chapter, we will explore Cyril's rejection of Nestorian christology. We intend to investigate what he interpreted Nestorius' picture of Christ to be, and why he believed it to be heterodox. Our study will focus on Nestorius' most frequently used designation for the Incarnation, and the focus of Cyril's attack on his christology: the term *συνάπτω* and its cognates. In his most controversial piece of correspondence with Nestorius he writes that *συνάφεια* does not describe a real union (*ἔνωσις φυσική*). He adds, "we deplore (*παραιτούμεθα*) the term *συνάφεια* as not appropriate to designate the union (*ἔνωσις*)."⁴ In another place he calls innovators (*καιντόμα*) those who use the term to describe the Incarnation and refers condescendingly to *συνάφεια* as Nestorius' useless word (*εἰκαῖος λόγος*).⁵ Later, he says that the term *εὔρεμα ἐστὶ φιλοκαίνου τε καὶ ἀδρανούς, καὶ παρειμένης φρενός, καὶ οὐχ ἐχούσης ὄρᾱν τοῦ μυστηρίου τὸ βάθος*.⁶ What would cause Cyril to call *συνάφεια* a novelty and the Nestorians innovators? After all, Nestorius was not the first of the Fathers to use *συνάφεια*, either generally or to describe the Incarnation. Even many of the orthodox had used it. They did, however, use the term primarily to describe the union within the

⁴ *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1.36.¹⁹⁻²⁰, PG77:112C; W 18.^{29f}).

⁵ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:23.¹⁹, PG 76:36D); *QUSC* (PG 75:1285D, 1333D).

⁶ *QUSC* (PG 75:1305A). Migne gives *φιλοκενον*, but a Syriac translation renders *φιλοκαῖνον*. Pusey attributes this to the same sounding *ε* and *αι*, and translates *φιλοκαῖνον*, which goes better with the context of Cyril's argument. See *Five Tomes against Nestorius; Scholia on the Incarnation; Christ is One; Fragments against Diodore, Theodore, the Synousiasts*, trans. Pusey (Oxford, 1881), 275 n. r.

Trinity,⁷ but it also served to designate the union of believers with God.⁸ Athanasius and the Cappadocians designated the union of God and believers with the term, as did Eusebius.⁹ Theodore of Mopsuestia, the teacher of Nestorius, had written that the Word was united to humanity taken from the Virgin by a connection (συνάφεια) of goodwill and divine favour, a phrase echoed in Nestorius.¹⁰ Why then does Cyril make Nestorius' use of συνάφεια such an integral part of his polemic against the Nestorians? Is it that Cyril objected to συνάφεια *per se*, or is it Nestorius' use of the term? Obviously, Cyril sees the christology of Nestorius as something different from the christology of Nicaea, which had become the standard of orthodoxy. He interprets Nestorius' use of συνάφεια as straying from the Fathers and presenting a new picture of Christ unlike the one painted by the Nicenes.¹¹ In addition, Cyril attacks the term as being unable to perceive the depths of the mystery of Christ (οὐχ ἐχούσης ὄραν τοῦ μυστηρίου τὸ βάθος). To determine why the term was deplorable to Cyril, and why he believed it was not orthodox, we must inquire as to what Cyril viewed as the proper use of συνάφεια, and then see why he rejected that particular use of the term to describe the depths of the *mysterium Christi*.

Cyril's Interpretation of Nestorius' συνάφεια

In its most fundamental usage, the term describes two things that are connected, united, or combined.¹² Cyril interprets Nestorius to mean

⁷ Cf. Eusebius, *De ecclesiastica* (PG 24:833B); Basil, *Adversus Eunomium* (PG 29:593C); Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* (PG 45:676D); Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* (PG 26:492B); Cyril, *De Trinitate* (77:1144C).

⁸ Cf. Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* (PG 26:293A); Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* (PG 45:597C); Eusebius, *De ecclesiastica* (PG 24:1041C).

⁹ Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* (PG 26:289C, 296A,B); Gregory of Nyssa, *De perfectione* (PG 46:277C), *Adversus Apollinarem* (PG 45:1212C), *Contra Eunomium* (PG 45:705C); Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evangelica* (PG 22:724D); *Contra Marcellum* (PG 24:809A); Basil, *Homilia in Psalm 41* (PG 29:400A), *Ep.* 210 (PG 32:973C), *Ep.* 262 (PG 32:776B); Gregory Nazianzen, *Ep.* 101 (PG 37:180B).

¹⁰ Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Symbolum* (PG 66:1013A, 1017BC).

¹¹ *Ep.* 41 (ACO 1.1.4:24.¹²⁻¹⁹; PG 77:189BC; W 44.²³⁻³³). See also *Ep.* 45 (ACO 1.1.6:151.⁸⁻¹³; PG 77:228Df; W 70.⁴⁻¹¹), *inter alia*, where Cyril claims to introduce nothing new into the doctrine of the Fathers. Here he is contrasting himself with Nestorius, whose language and theology Cyril interprets as something new that Nestorius introduces. In other words, Cyril claims that he represents the orthodox tradition, whereas Nestorius is heterodox.

¹² Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1305-1306, 1308-1310.

by it three things: the juxtaposition of the Word and the man Jesus, the indwelling of the man Jesus by the Word, and the use of the man Jesus as an instrument of the Word. We will see that Cyril rejects each of these descriptions of the Incarnation, and along with them Nestorius' *συνάφεια*. His explicit rejection of the term is captured in a number of images he uses to illustrate his conception of *συνάφεια* and why that conception does not, in Cyril's mind, designate the union of God and humanity in Christ. By analysing the manner in which Cyril uses these analogies we can see more clearly what best illustrates his own doctrine of the Incarnation.

The first analogy is that of a teacher and his pupil, which Cyril introduces to us in his discussions of why the Nestorians have dropped *ἕνωσις* in favour of *συνάφεια*.¹³ The former term designates two unlike things being truly and genuinely joined, and is the chosen term of the Fathers. There can be no mistaking its meaning, Cyril says, so there is no need to abandon it. However, the Nestorians have rejected it, opting instead to sever the one Incarnate Son into two sons, by their insistence on describing the Incarnation as a *συνάφεια* rather than a *ἕνωσις*. Cyril then provides an illustration of what a *συνάφεια* is, and how the term is properly used: *συνάπτοιτο ἂν μαθητῆς διδασκάλῳ κατὰ τε τὸ φιλομαθές*.¹⁴ Along with the analogy of a teacher and student Cyril says that a *συνάφεια* properly describes an *ὑπουργός*, *οὐκ ἄσυναφής κατὰ τὸ ἐκούσιον...τῷ λαβόντι πρὸς ὑπουργίαν*.¹⁵ What do these analogies tell us about his conception of *συνάφεια*? In both instances the illustration is concerned with a particular relationship which has been predicated on some mutual agreement. In the first image the commonality is a love of learning, in the second it is a common task to be performed. The smith and his understudy are said to be connected by the *ἐκούσιος* of the smith. In other words, some external force or purpose is the "glue" that provides the *συνάφεια* with cohesion. If the image is translated to the *mysterium Christi* a number of observations can be made about why Cyril rejects it. In the first place the analogy implies the presence of two "persons" who are pieces of some christological puzzle. The teacher, pupil, smith, and apprentice are all independent existents, the inference being that the Logos was connected to a pre-existent human individual. In such a case, Christ would consist of two separate individuals, which inevitably leads to the Two Sons doctrine of

¹³ *QUSC* (PG 75:1285B-1288A).

¹⁴ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1285D).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Diodore. Ultimately, and most importantly, the image tells us something about the relationship conceived of by Cyril between the Word and his body. If Nestorius' notion of *συνάφεια* which properly describes the preceding relationships is also the proper description of the Incarnation, then the components, as it were, of Christ—divinity and humanity—would be related only relatively (*σχετικῶς*) rather than really (*κατὰ φύσιν*). In both analogies, the individuals are partners in the relationship who have chosen to connect themselves to one another because of some external purpose. Their mutual relationship does not produce one active agent, but within the connection they remain two. Cyril needs to find a relationship in which one individual—Christ—is a combination of two things. Neither of these images provides him with such an illustration.

The term *συνάφεια* also properly signifies how a believer is joined to God by way of virtue and holiness, and not, therefore, how God the Word was united with his body. Earlier, Cyril himself, as well as other Fathers, had employed *συνάφεια* in this way.¹⁶ He unpacks this particular use of *συνάφεια* by explaining it as a participative relationship (*σχετική*) by which we are one spirit with the Lord.¹⁷ If *συνάφεια* describes the believer's union with God through Christ, then how could it be a fitting designation for the Incarnation?¹⁸ This is just as explicit at another point: "God is in us and we are connected with him relatively (*ἡμεῖς αὐτῷ συναπτόμεθα σκετικῶς*).... Therefore, should we also be called gods along with the one who is God by nature (*κατὰ φύσιν*)?"¹⁹ He further illustrates this usage of *συνάφεια* with an event that takes place on Israel's journey through the wilderness.²⁰ The account records the discontentment of the Israelites, which led to their murmuring against Moses and Aaron. Cyril recognises an interesting statement made in the account. The passage states that the murmuring was not only against Moses and Aaron, the ones to whom it was directed by the people, but was indirectly against God. Cyril reasons that this is because of the relationship between these two men and God. In other words, the relationship was such that what was directed against them was projected against God. This partnership, he argues, is a *συνάφεια*. Why could such a relationship

¹⁶ For Cyril see *Thesaurus* (PG 75:245B, 573D). For other Fathers see Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* (PG 26:240B, 293A); Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* (PG 45:597C, 609A); Eusebius, *De ecclesiastica* (PG 24:1041C).

¹⁷ *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:38.¹⁸⁻¹⁹; PG 77:112C; W 18.²⁸); citing 1 Corinthians 6.17.

¹⁸ Cf. *QUSC* (PG 75:1296BC).

¹⁹ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:52.⁴⁻⁷; PG 76:108D).

²⁰ *Scholia* (PG 75:1410Cff); citing Exodus 16.3ff, esp. 8 LXX.

not be used to designate the Incarnation? Cyril answers that if the same description of Moses' relationship to God is used of the Word's union with his flesh, then, he concludes, *Emmanuel non est vere Deus, non unigenitus Filius, non Deus secundum naturam*.²¹ Cyril rejects *συνάφεια* because it properly describes our relationship with God. If the flesh is related to God the Word in the same way that we are related to God, then Christ cannot be true God, but only a god through this participative relationship or partnership. In addition, because Christ is Lord, and thus deserving of our worship, he reasons, we ought to be co-worshipped along with Christ "so that every knee should bow to us", if *συνάφεια* designates both our relationship with God and the relationship between the flesh and the Word in Christ.²² Cyril rejects *συνάφεια* because it signifies a union such as believers have with God, rather than God the Word had with his flesh.

Besides the fact that *συνάφεια* rightly designates our relationship with God, rather than the union in the Incarnation, Cyril rejects Nestorius' qualification of the term. Nestorius says that the Incarnation is a *συνάφεια* by equality of rank (*ἄξια*), honour (*ἰσοτιμία*), or authority (*αὐθεντία*). To this Cyril replies, "equality of honour (*ἰσοτιμία*) does not unite the natures (*φύσεις*)".²³ He illustrates what he intends with the analogy of Peter and John: they were both Apostles and disciples of Christ, thus equal in rank, authority, and honour, but that equality did not unite them and cause them to become one human being; they remained two. He maintains that a partnership of this sort does not unite that which it connects. In Christ, that which is united—Godhead and humanity—must together produce one Christ. Consequently, a connection through rank or authority is inadequate. He again uses the Peter-John analogy in *Adversus Nestorium*, but also calls to mind the rulers of various lands throughout the world.²⁴ These rulers are equal in rank and honour, but are still individual in who they are, as well as what they say and do. Although they hold the same position, they have not thereby become one ruler. Equality of position is not sufficient to produce a true union. Therefore, this type of relationship does not adequately allow for a genuine Incarnation of the Word. If the union of God and humanity in Christ is a *συνάφεια* by way of equality of rank or dignity, in this case that of sonship, then one must confess two sons.

²¹ *Ibid.* (1411B). Extant only in Latin.

²² *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:52.⁷⁻⁸; PG 76:108D).

²³ *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:36.¹⁵; PG 77:112B; W 18.²³).

²⁴ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:35.^{7ff}; PG 76:65BC).

Cyril, of course, will not allow this. Similarly, Cyril reminds his readers that many have been called Christ and lord; the titles are not new with the Incarnation of the Word.²⁵ Other ordinary men have been give the same title as the Lord Jesus Christ. Does this mean that the Incarnation has taken place many times prior to the birth of Jesus? Absolutely not, Cyril answers. However, if the manner of the Incarnation is a *συνάφεια* through both being named Son of God, then the Incarnation of the Word is not unique.²⁶ It is not proper to consider Christ to be one individual because the Word and a separate human both possess the same title. Once again, he takes issue with the type of relationship properly described by using *συνάφεια*. In these instances, the relationship between the participants is one of mutual appellation. Such a connection does not result in one individual but the same two who entered into the partnership. To give the same title to two persons does not end their individuality and make them one person. We will see more of this type of argument from Cyril later.

Cyril asks whether Nestorius understands *συνάφεια* to mean a true union (*ἕνωσις καθ' ὑπόστασιν*) whereby one individual is the result, or to mean a juxtaposition (*παράθεσις*) of one thing to another.²⁷ He maintains that the latter usage is the one employed by Scripture, and cites a passage where God instructs Moses to fasten the curtains in the tabernacle with clasps (*κρίκος*) of gold.²⁸ The fastening together of the curtains causes them to be attached, but not to become one. The resultant may act in the same manner as a solid curtain would, but they remain, Cyril points out, separate and individual curtains, though attached to one another by the golden clasps. This cannot be the way in which the natures are united in Christ, as they would remain separate, not resulting in Christ being one individual. Instead, Cyril says, the Word was truly united to animated flesh (*ἀληθῶς ἕνωσθαι οὐκ ἀψύχῳ σαρκί*), and has made the body taken from the virgin his own (*ἴδιον*).²⁹ He explicitly denies that juxtaposition of the natures in Christ is a sufficient mode of union in describing the Incarnation.³⁰ But what is it about juxtaposition that causes Cyril to reject it as a mode of union? Nestorius had considered juxtaposition to result in one Christ, why could Cyril not do the same?

²⁵ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:45.⁸⁻¹²; PG 76:89D-92A).

²⁶ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:45.²³⁻²⁵; PG 76:92B).

²⁷ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:42.⁷⁻¹⁰; PG 76:84B).

²⁸ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:42.^{10ff.}; PG 76:84C); citing Exodus 26.6.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:36.¹⁷⁻¹⁸; PG 77:112B; W 18.²⁶⁻²⁷): οὐκ ἀπόχρη γὰρ τοῦτο [παράθεσις] πρὸς ἕνωσιν φυσικὴν.

Cyril's Rejection of Nestorius' συνάφεια

Nestorius warns against the use of Θεοτόκος as an appellation for Mary, and he proposes that Christ is one because of a union of rank rather than nature. In response, Cyril states that Nestorius has blasphemed in no small way, in that he has divided Christ into two persons and individuals (πρόσωπα καὶ ὑποστάσεις) which are in fact separated from one another as though a separate human being were connected with God by rank alone (κατὰ μόνην τὴν ἀξίαν), and not true union (ἔνωσις ἀληθής).³¹ How then, Cyril asks, is Christ to be one individual if he is nothing other than two individuals which simply have the same rank or authority? In Nestorius' συνάφεια, the natures or hypostases are merely juxtaposed, held together by a common title, as we saw earlier. If Christ is two natures that are juxtaposed, and thus separated, Cyril contends that Christ cannot be called one. On the contrary, one must confess two Christs and two Sons of God.³² Christ, therefore, must be a true union of the natures or hypostases, rather than a juxtaposition of them in which they are given the same title.³³

Subsequently, with Nestorius' συνάφεια there is one Son of God who is Son by nature—i.e., the Word—and another who is Son of God because the title has been bestowed upon him through his relationship with the Son by nature.³⁴ This is a revisiting of the Two Sons doctrine of Diodore of Tarsus. For Cyril, however, there are not two Sons of God, one by nature and one through the συνάφεια, but only one Son of God, the Word Incarnate.³⁵ In his *Letter to Eulogius*, he says that the definition of a union (ἔνωσις) does not denote one thing (πράγματον) joined to itself, but two things, which are different in nature, but are brought together.³⁶ In the Incarnation, Cyril continues, the two things that are the subject of the union are the nature of the Word and the nature of the flesh endowed with a rational human soul. After the union, though, one does not speak of two individual things, but one, because the natures are joined in the union. Cyril acknowledges that the Orientals spoke with confusing terminology as they tried to avoid a confusion of the natures; but this is different, he

³¹ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:34.^{37-35.1}; PG 76:65A).

³² *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:36.^{13f}; PG 76:68D-69A).

³³ Cf. *ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:71.^{35-72.33}; PG 76:157B-160C).

³⁴ *QU/SC* (PG 75:1296Dff).

³⁵ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1297CD).

³⁶ *Ep.* 44 (ACO 1.1.4:36.⁷⁻⁹; PG 77:225D; W 64.¹⁹⁻²²).

proposes, from what Nestorius teaches. Whereas the Orientals taught a true union of the natures, though using inadequate language to describe this union, Nestorius actually teaches a *συνάφεια* in which the natures are placed alongside one another, rather than existing together in a true union. This juxtaposition of the natures, Cyril contends, necessarily means two Christs.³⁷ Cyril's admonition to Nestorius is to cease juxtaposing the natures and instead confess one Christ, Son, and Lord.³⁸ Furthermore, Cyril says that he is amazed that although Nestorius says that the body has been ineffably connected with God, he does not say that it is his very own (*ἴδιον*) in order that it might be thought of as one with him. Rather, he separated Christ into the man Jesus and God the Word.³⁹ He reasons that if two individuals are juxtaposed to one another in a partnership such as this, and thus the Word is connected to an ordinary human being, then the Word's ownership of the humanity is lost, with serious soteriological implications. When the natures/hypostases are divided, being conceived of only as juxtaposed to one another, then the man Jesus who is connected to the Word has ownership of the body, and not the Word himself. This cannot fit into Cyril's system of soteriology: were one to accept Nestorius' *συνάφεια* as a designation of the Incarnation, then "we have no longer been redeemed by God, but by the blood of another human being".⁴⁰ If an ordinary human individual is given the title of Son of God, along with the Word who possess the title by nature, then a human being would have provided salvation. However, Christ said, "The bread which I give is my flesh for the life of the world".⁴¹ If, Cyril reasons, the flesh was connected to the Word only by a participative, and thus external relationship, that is, a juxtaposition, then how can Christ, the Word Incarnate, rightfully call it his own without lying?⁴² In addition, if the flesh does not belong to the Word of God, who is the one who gives life, then how can the flesh be said to provide life for the world, for the flesh of an ordinary human being cannot give life?

The sentiment is echoed in the eleventh *Anathema*, where Cyril condemns whoever does not confess that the Lord's flesh (*σάρξ*) is life giving (*ζωοποιόν*) and thus belong to the Word of God himself, but

³⁷ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.4:36.^{15ff}; PG 77:228A; W 64.^{30ff}).

³⁸ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:45.³³; PG 76:92C).

³⁹ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:47.³⁻⁶; PG 76:96C).

⁴⁰ *QUSC* (PG 75:1336A).

⁴¹ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1260A); quoting John 6.33.

⁴² *Ibid.*

says it belongs to different person connected (συνημμένον) to him through rank (κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν).⁴³ In the explanation of this anathema Cyril argues that it is not the body and blood of an ordinary human being which are offered in the Eucharist, but that of the Word.⁴⁴ Otherwise, the body and blood offered would not be life giving (ζωοποιόν): “Flesh profits nothing; it is the spirit that gives life”.⁴⁵ Juxtaposition denies ownership of the body to the Word, and thus both affirms a redemption provided through an ordinary human being and rejects the life-giving properties of the flesh. In order for humankind to be redeemed, the body must belong to none other than the Word of God himself; the Word of God become a human being.

A primary source of Cyril’s incarnational and soteriological thought is Philippians 2, the *Carmen Christi*. In this passage Cyril discovers the *kenosis*, or self-emptying of the Word, a voluntary condescension of God to the limitations of humanity. Cyril charges that Nestorius’ συνάφεια spoils the spotless character of the Incarnation by disallowing any possibility of the *kenosis*.⁴⁶ According to Cyril, the Logos of God voluntarily descended into self-emptying though he is God by nature both before the *kenosis* and when he is in the kenotic state.⁴⁷ It is through this self-emptying that the Word experiences a human life, and suffers and dies for the redemption of humankind. If Christ did not suffer and die as God in the flesh, then he has not provided salvation to those he came to save.

There are numerous instances when the Bible speaks of Christ in a way that Cyril argues disqualifies συνάφεια as an appropriate term to designate the Incarnation.⁴⁸ These biblical descriptions of Christ can be fitting only if he is the Word become a human being, rather than the Word and a human individual existing in some sort of partnership. One such description is that Christ is the one who has become “under the law”.⁴⁹ Nestorius claims that this passage refers to the humanity of Christ rather than the Word. Cyril, though, questions how a human being can *become* under the law, when he is already under it. For one to become under the law, he must first be above it, and God alone is above the law. Therefore, Cyril reasons, the passage

⁴³ *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:41.^{28ff.}; PG 77:121C).

⁴⁴ *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:25.¹⁻¹¹; PG 76:312A).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.5:25.⁶⁻⁷; PG 76:312B); quoting John 6.63.

⁴⁶ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:49.¹²⁻¹⁹; PG 76:101B).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:44.^{17ff.}; PG 76:89BC).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:37.^{42ff.}; PG 76:72D); citing Galatians 4.4.

referring to the one who has become under the law must be speaking of the Word become a human being, rather than some other human individual.⁵⁰ Through his *kenosis*, the Word is said to have subjected himself willingly to the law, albeit by nature he remains above it. This he did in order to redeem humankind.⁵¹

Cyril contends that there are other passages which speak of Christ in such a way that juxtaposition is discredited. For example, Christ is the one who “came from above” and is “out of heaven” and “fills all things”.⁵² These qualities all belong to God and not to an ordinary human individual. Furthermore, the *Carmen Christi* explicitly denies that Christ is a deified human individual rather than the Word become a human being, Cyril argues. After quoting the hymn he writes, “Who is it that we say was in the form of God, and equal with the Father, but did not think this something to be grasped but rather descended into self-emptying and into the form of a slave, humbling himself and becoming like us?”⁵³ An ordinary human being, Cyril maintains, is not equal with God, and therefore cannot see equality with God as something to be grasped. Moreover, a human being cannot descend into self-emptying or humble himself and be made in the likeness of a human being; he is one already. The Word is God by nature, and it must be he that the *Carmen* says is made in the likeness of humanity.⁵⁴ Likewise, only one who is free can be made a slave, which disqualifies an ordinary human being from assuming that role. Once again, only the Word, who is free by nature, can be said to assume the form of a slave.

Cyril also says that Christ has ἀναλαμβάνοντα πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀδελφότητα ψυχῆς ἀνθρωπίνης καὶ σαρκός.⁵⁵ One who is a human being already cannot assume a brotherhood with humankind, only one who is not already a human being. For Cyril this means that the Word has become a human being, and thereby come into brotherhood with all humankind. To say that Christ was a human individual juxtaposed to the Word would make this statement inconsistent with the Incarnational event. Likewise, that would be the case with the Word assuming the poverty of human nature. This poverty does not belong to the Word naturally (κατὰ φύσιν), but it does belong to human

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:38.^{3ff}; PG 76:73B).

⁵¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:38.^{32ff}; PG 76:76AB).

⁵² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:39.^{3ff}; PG 76:73A); citing Ephesians 4.10; John 3.31, 8.23.

⁵³ *Scholia* (PG 75:1383C). Extant only in Latin.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:72.¹⁰⁻¹¹; PG 76:157B).

beings naturally. Therefore, in the Incarnation the Word became a human being, rather than being connected to one who was a human being already.⁵⁶ These elements of the *kenosis* of the Word would be impossible, says Cyril, if a human being is connected to the Word by a *συνάφεια*. This fact renders *συνάφεια* insufficient to describe the union of God and humanity in Christ.⁵⁷

The most scathing condemnation of Nestorius' use of *συνάφεια* comes in the charge that Nestorius is god-making (*Θεοποίησις*).⁵⁸ In this passage Cyril quotes Nestorius' comments about the Magi who came and worshipped the baby Christ. Nestorius says that "it was not a mere baby viewed by itself, but a body connected ineffably with God (*σῶμα συνημμένον ἀρρήτως Θεῷ*)".⁵⁹ This sounds very much like a statement Cyril himself could make. However, he continues with another statement attributed to Nestorius in which Nestorius confesses that he worships the human being connected to the Word *along with* the Godhead.⁶⁰ Seen in this light it is apparent why Cyril would reject *συνάφεια*, and would be appalled by the underlying christological implication. He denounces Nestorius' *συνάφεια*, claiming that such a notion leads to a division of Christ into a separate human being and the Word, and that the logical conclusion of this idea is two worships; one for the man Jesus and another for the Word, who is God by nature. On the other hand, Cyril says that the orthodox offer but one worship to Emmanuel rather than dividing him into the Word and the body, which is truly united to him (*τὸ ἐνεθὲν αὐτῷ καθ' ὑπόστασιν σῶμα*).⁶¹ Surely, Cyril maintains, Nestorius' teaching of two worships makes a human being equal with God, thus adding a fourth god to the Trinity.⁶² If the human being is co-named and co-worshipped with the Word, then there is one who is God by nature and one who is made God because of the *συνάφεια*. This is the same argument we saw in Cyril's discussions of Nestorius' two Christs and Sons. The worship of a human being is god making in Cyril's mind, and Nestorius is guilty of both. How else is Nestorius' *συνάφεια* to be understood, reasons Cyril? If it is a true union, then there is no need to sever the natures/hypostases. If it is juxtaposition, which the term implies, then a human being is added to the holy and *homoousion*

⁵⁶ *QUSC* (PG 75:1320A-1321A).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:46.³⁷; PG 76:96A).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:46.³⁸⁻⁴⁰; PG 76:96C) (=Loofs 354.²²⁻²⁵).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:47.¹¹⁻¹²; PG 76:96D) (=Loofs 260.⁶⁻⁷).

⁶¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:47.²⁸⁻³⁰; PG 76:97B).

⁶² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:48.¹⁷; PG 76:100A).

Trinity.⁶³ Christ is said to have ascended with his flesh to the throne. If *συνάφεια* is the proper designation of the Incarnation, then the human being connected to the Word would have also ascended to the throne, giving an ordinary human being a place on the throne of God. Cyril rejects this way of speaking about the union of God and humanity in Christ.⁶⁴

A second component of Nestorius' use of *συνάφεια* that Cyril deems to be heretical is the notion of God the Word dwelling in an ordinary human individual. Nestorius denies that *Θεοτόκος*, Mother of God, is a fitting appellation for the mother of Jesus, and opts instead for *Χριστοτόκος*, Mother of Christ.⁶⁵ He knows that for Cyril *Θεοτόκος* is at the heart of orthodox belief about Christ. Nestorius rejects it, however, because he believes Scripture teaches that God "passed through" (*παρῆλθεν*) the Virgin but was not born to her. Scripture, Nestorius argues, never teaches that God was born to the Virgin, the Mother of Christ, but that the one who is Jesus, Christ, Son, and Lord was.⁶⁶ Cyril interprets this to mean that Nestorius' denies that Christ was truly God. He infers from this statement that Christ is but a God-bearing (*θεοφόρος*) individual. What does *παρῆλθεν* mean if not birth?⁶⁷ Cyril equates this with Nestorius' concept of *συνάφεια*, and concludes that Nestorius means to say that Christ is merely a holy man with God the Word indwelling him.⁶⁸ By denying the human birth of the Logos, Nestorius is, in Cyril's estimation, relegating Christ to the level of an ordinary human being externally related to the Word by means of indwelling. If Mary is not *Θεοτόκος*, then Emmanuel is but a God-bearing (*θεοφόρος*) individual.⁶⁹

Nestorius also comments that it was not God Incarnate who had died and subsequently was raised from the dead.⁷⁰ This is baffling to Cyril, as he inquires who became a human being, if not God the Word. It would be absurd to claim that a human being became incarnate. Only a nature that is beyond humanity can be said to have

⁶³ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:52.¹⁹⁻²¹; PG 76:112A).

⁶⁴ *Scholia* (PG 75:1382BC). See also *Ibid.* (1407CD) and *QUSC* (PG 75:1285A, 1285D-1287A).

⁶⁵ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:18.^{24ff}; PG 76:25A-32C).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:18.³⁰⁻³¹; PG 76:25A).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:21.¹; PG 76:32A).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:20.⁹⁻¹⁰; PG 76: 28CD): ἄρα κοινὸν μὲν ἄνθρωπον ὡς ἓνα τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς, πλὴν ἡγιασμένον ὡς ἕκοικον ἔχοντα τὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγον.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:31.^{35ff}; PG 76:57AB).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:21.²⁴⁻²⁹; PG 76:32C).

become flesh. Therefore, Cyril concludes, the Word was truly incarnate and became a human being, and therefore is not, as Nestorius teaches, merely indwelling a mere human being. Cyril takes Nestorius' statement, "The Son dwelt in the body" (ἐνώκησεν ὁ υἱὸς ἐν τῷ σώματι) to mean that Christ was God-bearing (θεοφόρος) and therefore not God the Word become a human being.⁷¹ This claim by Nestorius is not only an attack on the Θεοτόκος, but is also a war against the glory of Christ.⁷² To say that Christ is but a God-bearing man is to deny him to be truly God, but only a human individual connected to God. He is no more than an ordinary human being who has been made holy by the indwelling of God. Indwelling is a component of Nestorius' συνάφεια, and a notion that Cyril believes is central to his doctrine of the Incarnation.

Two important analogies find their way into this discussion; both of them used by the Nestorians and rejected by Cyril. The first is that of a man dwelling in a city.⁷³ A man who lives in a particular city is called by that name. In the case of Jesus, though he was born in Bethlehem he was called a Nazarene because he lived in Nazareth. In the same way, because the Word dwells in a human being, he is called a human being. This is a non-sensical assertion, Cyril claims. Someone who lives in Nazareth is called "of-Nazareth" (Ναζωραῖος) and not "Nazareth". Likewise, were the Logos only dwelling in a human being he should be called "of-humanity" (ἀνθρωπαῖον) rather than a human being (ἄνθρωπος). Furthermore, the entire Trinity should be called human if the Nestorians' reasoning is correct, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are each said to dwell within us.⁷⁴

Another analogy that is not suitable for illustrating the Incarnation is that of a garment and the one wearing it.⁷⁵ Nestorius said that he worshipped that which was worn—that is, the body of Christ—because of the one who was wearing it—that is, God the Word. For Cyril this is a denial of orthodoxy with regards to the union of Godhead and humanity. There is but one Son to be worshipped: the Word become flesh. Separating the Word from his body is dividing the one Christ. If one were to say that he worships the body of a king because of his soul, and because of what cannot be seen he worships

⁷¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:76.³⁷⁻³⁸, 77.^{14ff}, PG 76:169C-172A).

⁷² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:32.²⁴, PG 76:60A).

⁷³ *QU/SC* (PG 75:1313Dff).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* Cf. 1 Corinthians 3:16 and John 14:23.

⁷⁵ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:51.³⁴, PG 76:108B).

what is seen, he would be reprimanded. The king is one individual, not two separate things, one seen and one not. Christ is not to be conceived of as the Word wearing the body of a human being. This would be his taking up residence in an ordinary human being, rather than becoming a human being himself. In his *Scholia de Incarnatione Unigeniti* Cyril argues that Jesus Christ is the Word of God become a human being.⁷⁶ This is to defend Nicene christology against the danger of Nestorius' conception of the Word's dwelling within an ordinary human being. Such a notion is to be shunned as not proper christology.

Cyril rejects what he understands Nestorius to mean by θεοφόρος: an ordinary human person indwelt by God the Word. He provides a number of reasons why he rejects this idea. First, were Christ merely the Logos taking up residence within an ordinary human being, then he would not be truly God (Θεὸς ἀληθῶς).⁷⁷ He perceives this to be the logical conclusion of Nestorius' insistence that Θεοτόκος is an inappropriate title for Mary. If the Virgin gave birth to an ordinary human being, rather than to God become human, then the one born to her would not be God. Cyril makes it very clear that he does not regard the Incarnation as the Word of God taking up residence in an ordinary human being.⁷⁸ This is an external (σχετικήν) relationship. The Logos did not come into a human being, but became a human being.⁷⁹ Second, Scripture acknowledges that God has dwelt in others before. If the Logos dwelt in the man Jesus is the same that he did in the prophets of old, then he is no greater than they were.⁸⁰ Were this the case, then the Incarnation has happened many times, and Christ is therefore not unique.⁸¹ In addition, Nestorius says that he dwelt in a human being as in one of the saints, and that the human being is co-worshipped because of the indwelling. Does that mean we are to worship one another?⁸² Cyril determines that Nestorius' conception of indwelling means that an ordinary human being is worshipped alongside God the Word.

⁷⁶ *Scholia* (PG 75:1384Dff).

⁷⁷ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:18.³²; PG 76:25A).

⁷⁸ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:16.²⁶⁻³², 19.¹⁰; PG 77:24C, 29C); *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:36.⁹⁻¹³; PG 77:112B; W 18.¹⁵⁻²⁰); *Scholia* (PG 75:1384Dff); *Homiliae Diversae* 2 (ACO 1.1.2:95.²⁷; PG 77:989A); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:30.³⁷⁻³⁸; PG 76:56A); *inter alia*.

⁷⁹ *Homiliae Diversae* 2 (ACO 1.1.2:95.²⁷; PG 77:989A).

⁸⁰ *QUSC* (PG 75:1316A-1317A); *Scholia* (PG 75:1392B-D).

⁸¹ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:30.^{11ff}; PG 76:52BC).

⁸² *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:21.^{2ff}; PG 76:304Bff).

Finally, he rejects Nestorius' indwelling because it nullifies redemption. A God-bearing (θεοφόρος) human being cannot provide salvation for humankind: only God can save.⁸³ Consequently, if Christ is no more than a human being with the Word dwelling in him, then he is less than God and unable to redeem humankind. If the death is not that of the Logos Incarnate, then it is not a saving death.⁸⁴ The Eucharist is not life giving if the body belongs to the person in whom God dwells, rather than to God the Word himself.⁸⁵

However, Cyril says that there is an indwelling which is properly ascribed to the Incarnation. We can see what Cyril conceived the proper interpretation of the Word dwelling in human individual to be when he explains how Emmanuel ought to be understood.⁸⁶ We understand that he has become a human being, and so is said to dwell in the flesh with us. For Nestorius the indwelling is a participative relationship, whereas for Cyril it is true and inherent.⁸⁷ By this he means that one person is given the titles of Word, God, Life, Glory, Lord of Hosts, which apply to God the Word both before and after the Incarnation, and Human, Christ, Jesus, Mediator, which apply to him only after becoming flesh. Still, both sets of titles are attributed to the same person, the Logos of God.⁸⁸ Therefore, when the Bible says that in him "all the fullness of the godhead dwelt bodily", it does not mean that the Word dwelt within an ordinary human being. On the contrary, it is like a person's body and his soul. The soul is said to dwell within the body, but it does not mean they are separated, but there is one single person. Another image illustrating Cyril's understanding of the proper way of speaking of the Incarnation as an indwelling is that of a flower and its perfume.⁸⁹ Although the fragrance is said to dwell within the flower, they are not separate individuals. There is no flower without the perfume and no perfume without the flower. If either of the components is not present, then there is no lily. So it is with Christ; it is impossible that the Word and his body could be considered to be separated after the union, otherwise the entire economy of Incarnation would be ruined. The Word dwells in his body, as does the soul of a person or the fragrance of a

⁸³ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:22.^{25ff}; PG 77:37C).

⁸⁴ *QUSC* (PG 75:1341BC).

⁸⁵ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:91.²⁻⁸; PG 76:205CD); *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:25.¹⁻¹¹; PG 76:312AB).

⁸⁶ *Scholia* (PG 75:1371Cff).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:30.³⁸; PG 76:56A).

⁸⁸ *Scholia* (PG 75:1384Dff).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1380C).

lily, but not as a person in his garment. The former image allows the Word ownership of the body, whereas the latter does not. By this indwelling is not intended to imply that the Word was in the body in a spatial manner; because the Word, who is incorporeal, is beyond spatial constraints, even in the Incarnation.⁹⁰ He cannot be thought of as being in the body as in a receptacle.⁹¹ To say that the Word dwelled in humanity means that he lived a human life, rather than dwelled within a human being.

The third component of Nestorius' *συνάφεια* which Cyril rejects is that God the Word has taken up an ordinary human being like us to use as his instrument (*ὄργανον*) to provide redemption.⁹² Cyril goes on to indicate that there is an instrumental quality to the Incarnation, but it is the Word using his flesh as an instrument in the same way that the soul uses the body. The fundamental distinction between this understanding, and that of Nestorius is that Cyril wants to argue that the body belongs to the Word in the same way that a person's body belongs to him. The alternative, and the view that he perceives in Nestorius, is to deny ownership of the body to the Word, and instead afford it to some sanctified individual, in which case Christ would be two individuals glued together rather than one individual himself.⁹³ The first is the Word; the second is the person whom he assumed. Cyril is intent on maintaining singleness of agent. In other words, the referent of the Incarnation must be the Word, both before and after become a human being. To say, as he accuses Nestorius of doing, that the Incarnation is the Word's assumption of an ordinary human being like us to utilise as his instrument is to deny the necessary singleness of agent.

To illustrate what he perceives Nestorius to mean by instrument Cyril employs the image of a father whose son is skilled on the lyre and is able to sing exceptionally well.⁹⁴ The father would not regard the lyre and his son's skill of singing to be equal with his son. That would be inane. The instrument is used to demonstrate the giftedness of the son; and even without it the son is still the son of his father. No one would argue that the son and the lyre are one, or even that they are equal in significance. If the body of Christ, which belongs to a human being assumed by the Word as his instrument, is not his, then he is not truly Son of God, but the Son using an ordinary human

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, et. alia.

⁹¹ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:38.^{21ff.}, PG 76:73D).

⁹² *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:46.²⁸, PG 76:93D).

⁹³ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:18.¹⁵⁻²³, PG 76:25D).

⁹⁴ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:20.^{12ff.}, PG 77:32D-33B).

being, like the boy using his lyre.⁹⁵ This means that we are redeemed not by God, but through the death of a human being. However, a human being's death cannot save.⁹⁶ To contend that "the one born of the woman" was a human being assumed by the Word as an instrument for some particular purpose would require that all the prophets were instruments in the same way, as they too were men used in the service of God. If Christ were an instrument like the prophets, then he is no more unique than they were. How then does he save if he is a mere human individual indwelt by God like the prophets of old? One final soteriological implication results from affirming the instrumental use of a human being by the Word: the Eucharist is cannibalism.⁹⁷ Cyril uses explicit language to shock his readers into noticing the force of *συνάφεια*. If God has taken up a human being as an instrument, then the body of Christ belongs to that human being, and not to the Word. Consequently, the body would not be life giving, as it is the body of an ordinary human being. Furthermore, when partaking of the body in the Eucharist one would eat the body of a mere human being.

As with indwelling, Cyril also acknowledges that there is a proper manner of using 'instrument' to describe the Incarnation. Rather than the Word employing a human being as the instrument, he is rightly said to use his body in the same way that a human being uses his body.⁹⁸ The body of a human being belongs to him and none other. He has ownership of it. In Nestorius' use the body belongs to the assumed human being, whereas in Cyril's use it belongs to the Word. The only instance where one can properly describe the Incarnation using instrumental language is when the condition of the Word's ownership of the body is inherent. This is to say that Cyril appeals to how one understands the human being. This individual is not a human being who possesses a soul and body, as though they were distinct from him, but this person *is* a soul and body. So too Christ is not a person who has the Word and a humanity, but Christ *is* the Word and his humanity: the two cannot be separated. It is incorrect to speak in a way that divides an individual human being, and it is likewise heretical to divide the Word from his body in Christ. This is the fundamental difference between the external, participative relationship of the natures in Nestorius' *συνάφεια* and their inherent

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *QUSC* (PG 75:1341BC); *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:22.²⁵⁻²⁶, 31; PG 77:37C).

⁹⁷ *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:25.¹⁻¹¹; PG 76:312AB). Cf. *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:90.³⁹⁻⁹¹.⁸; PG 76:205CD).

⁹⁸ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:46.²⁸⁻³¹; PG 76:96A).

relationship in Cyril's true union (ἔνωσις καθ' ὑπόστασιν). For this reason he rejects Nestorius' συνάφεια and its correlative notion of God's use of a human being as an instrument in the Incarnation.

Concluding Remarks

There are a number of observations we can make concerning Cyril's rejection of Nestorius' συνάφεια. We have seen that he interprets Nestorius' christology as picturing Christ as the result of an external, participative relationship in which the Word is juxtaposed to a human individual. These two constituents are believed to be held together by the goodwill and grace of God in which he bestows upon the human individual the same appellation and dignity as the Word. He believes that Nestorius is searching for a technical process that describes a collective unity, while allowing the constituents to remain unconfused and separate, while retaining their respective properties entirely. From our earlier discussion,⁹⁹ we know that two theories of combination fit those criteria: παράθεσις/σύνθεσις and Stoic κρᾶσις. All other theories altered or diminished at least one of the ingredients. Nestorius explicitly rejected κρᾶσις, perhaps because of its Apollinarian flavour. Cyril then reads his christology as being a juxtaposition of two individuals: the Word and the man Jesus. Even Nestorius' qualification of συνάφεια with the ideas of the goodwill and grace of God, the equality of rank, and the same appellation does not convince Cyril that his christology is orthodox. Instead, as we have seen, these very qualifications become the central elements of Cyril's attack.

Cyril sees three correlative components of συνάφεια. Besides juxtaposition, it is also described as the indwelling of a human being by the Word, and the Word's use of an individual human being as an instrument for his purpose of redemption. With all three notions, the Word is separate from the humanity of Christ. Cyril recognises both christological and soteriological implications of picturing Christ in this way. First, this is nothing other than the two-Sons doctrine of Diodore of Tarsus. One individual is Son of God by nature, while the other is Son of God by designation only, which results from the juxtaposition with the Word. In addition, this makes Christ an ordinary human being, albeit one used by the Logos of God. Because Christ is a mere human being, it follows that he has no ability to save,

⁹⁹ See Chapter Three above.

and redemption is not afforded to humankind in him. Many others have been indwelled by God and used as his instrument, but they were unable to save. A Christ who is only a human being joined to God would be no different.

In Cyril's interpretation, the Christ of Nestorius' system is the result of a process by which two things have been glued together. His [Christ's] identity is then only in the collective unity of the two constituents. The fundamental flaw in this christology is that the two things which are glued together are the Word of God and an ordinary human being, as we have seen. What about this idea did Cyril find unacceptable? Ultimately, it is that Nestorius' picture of Christ did not allow the Word to possess ownership of the humanity of Christ. Instead, it belonged to the individual connected to, indwelled by, or used by the Word. The consequence of such a notion is that the characteristics, properties, and experiences of Christ are not attributed to the Word. But how does Christ save if he is only an ordinary human being, because the death of a human being cannot save? If Christ were a mere human being, he too would need redemption from sin. How, then, does Nestorius' use of *συνάφεια* deny ownership of the human experiences of Christ to the Logos? The Word is incorporeal as God, and therefore has no body of his own. Therefore, in Cyril's interpretation of Nestorius, he assumes a human being prior to or at birth that he indwells and uses as his instrument. The infant becomes a boy and then a man. He grows and matures and learns. This growth and maturity cannot be attributed to the Logos, because as God he is complete and all knowing. It must be attributed to the man Jesus, as men grow and learn. His preaching and teaching is also attributed to the man Jesus, as these are human activities. Moreover, what of his miracles and healing, who performed these? These acts must be regarded as works of the Word, as only God can perform them. A final source of contention is Christ's death. Who dies, the man Jesus or God the Word? Nestorius naturally says the man Jesus. It would be blasphemy to say that God dies, as he cannot die. In the light of these conclusions, Cyril asks, "Who then saves, is it the Logos or the man Jesus?" Nestorius says that God saves. The next question is how he does so. If the death is that of a human being and not of God the Word, then how does the Logos save? It is at this point that Cyril demonstrates, in his mind, the inadequacy of *συνάφεια*, believing that it presents an independent human being alongside the Word. The idea of *συνάφεια* preserves the impassibility of the Logos, but denies the true union of God and humanity in Christ. The body is then that of someone other than the Word. Consequently, although Nestorius affirms that Christ is the

subject of both the divine and human experiences, the Word is the referent only of those experiences that are properly said to be divine. However, for Cyril, the humanity of Christ must belong to the Word, and not to someone else if humankind is to be saved. Providing redemption is not a joint effort between a human person and God, but is entirely the work of God who became a human being in order to redeem humankind. Cyril contends that the proper christological question is not how are two things brought together, but how one illustrates one living being that is the result of a union of two different things. These questions are farther apart than they might initially seem. The former question, attributed to Nestorius by Cyril, presupposes two independent existents. With regard to Christ this can only mean, at least to Cyril, that Nestorius conceived of a human individual separate from the Word to whom he was joined and in whom he dwelt. This leads Nestorius to conceive of the Incarnation as a partnership of the Word and this other person, illustrated especially by Cyril's teacher-pupil and smith-apprentice analogies. God and humanity have united themselves in an effort to provide salvation by means of their partnership. As we have seen, the soteriological implications of such a notion are beyond reconciliation with orthodoxy. Cyril sees no other way to interpret Nestorius' christology. Ultimately, then, what differentiates the Cyril and Nestorius is Cyril's interpretation of Nestorius' christology as explaining the Incarnation as two independent existents that have been glued together to produce one collective unity. There is far more than emphasis or semantics at stake, it is the foundation of proper christological thinking. In stark contrast to Nestorius, Cyril says that the Word must have ownership of the body. All the experiences of Christ—whether human or divine—must be attributed to the Logos.

As we have seen, it is at this point that Cyril's images become important to the discussion. He has already described what he believes Nestorianism to be: juxtaposition of the Word and a human individual. Now, he looks for analogies that clarify and illustrate what *συνάφεια* properly designates. In each instance, the relationship between the various elements of the image is an external, participative one, in which two individuals are 'glued' together by some means. Therefore, none of these images is rightly attributed to the *mysterium Christi*. Christ cannot be the result of a relationship between the Word and an ordinary human being, brought together, for example, as a teacher and a pupil are joined to one another. Consequently, Cyril is looking for images that will illustrate that the Logos became a human being, not that he indwelt or joined himself to a human individual, or that he used a human individual as an instrument for his work. He

rejects those images that he believes imply the presence of a human being other than the Word, who has become a human being himself. He uses analogies from which this cannot be inferred. For example, the body soul analogy illustrates not how two things are brought together, but how one person is the combination of two things. Other images serve the same purpose. In each illustration that which is the referent is one entity that is somehow comprised of two things. They do not demonstrate how the union of divinity and humanity took place, but rather illustrate that Christ is one from two. Because the analogies that Cyril says rightly illustrate *συνάφεια* do not allow the Word to be the referent of all the experiences of Christ, he rejects both *συνάφεια* and the corresponding illustrations. We have seen here that Cyril denies that Christ is the result of a gluing together of two puzzle pieces. In Part Three we will examine in greater detail what he affirmed about the person and work of Christ.

CHAPTER FIVE
ADVERSUS HAERESEM ALIUM

In the preceding chapter, we began our investigation of Cyril's rejection of the two heresies that dominated discussions during and after the so-called Nestorian Controversy, by exploring Cyril's charge against Nestorius. Cyril believed that the Bishop of Constantinople divided the natures in Christ, which necessarily amounted to the notion that the Word of God existed alongside an ordinary human individual, joined to him merely by the grace of God. It was Nestorius' conception of *συνάφεια*, which Cyril interpreted as meaning a participative relationship between God and a human being through their juxtaposition in Christ, that was the focus of the Alexandrian's attack. Nestorius' use of indwelling language and talk of the humanity of Christ as the instrument of the Word convinced Cyril of this. For him, this was a revisiting of the dreaded two-Sons doctrine of Diodore of Tarsus, and the christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia.

The fundamental flaw in such a picture of Christ, in Cyril's thinking, is that ownership of the humanity belongs to someone other than the Word. This other human being, to whom the Word was supposedly connected, possesses the inherent ownership of the flesh that was offered for redemption. This has destructive soteriological implications: the death of an ordinary human individual cannot save. In addition, this is in opposition, Cyril maintains, to the Scriptural teaching that the Word became a human being. Both those images that Nestorius used to illustrate the Incarnation and those that Cyril used to illustrate his conception of *συνάφεια* were rejected as not appropriate in the christological context. As we saw, the Cyril's dismissal of Nestorius' christology was based not on semantic grounds, but on the notion of a mutually participative relationship between God the Word and another individual. This relationship would mean two individuals are the focus of the Incarnation.

In this chapter, we will examine the second heresy that was highlighted by the debate between Cyril and the Orientals: Apollinarianism. This was not only Nestorius' counter-charge against Cyril, but also the accusation made by many of the other Eastern Bishops. Obviously, the Apollinarian Controversy was still alive even into the fifth century. It was a charge from which Cyril was never

able to free himself fully. Our investigation will seek to determine the content of the accusation, the primary reasons why Cyril's christology was so prone to be interpreted in this manner, and the reasons he gives for rejecting it.

Nestorius and the other Easterns do not explicitly call Cyril an Apollinarian, though the implication is continually present. They group the Alexandrian with Apollinarius and others who refer to the Virgin as Θεοτόκος, and imply that the two Alexandrians hold the same christological position on other occasions.¹ Nestorius, the antagonist, was the theological heir of Theodore of Mopsuestia and the Antiochene tradition he so aptly represented.² Theodore was a rabid opponent of Apollinarius of Laodicea. His christology posited a prosopic union of God the Word and the complete human nature he assumed. Christ, for Theodore, was a unique figure with two hypostases or natures—God the Word and the human being Jesus Christ. The “union” (certainly not in the later sense of Cyril of Alexandria) was due to the “good pleasure” of the Logos. Theodore's indwelling framework sought to protect the impassible Logos from being offended by the human experiences of Christ, while at the same time was determined to ensure the importance of a human soul in the christological equation.³ In fact, it seems that the existence of a human soul in Christ was the means by which Theodore was to protect the Logos from human passions: the soul is the recipient of human passions. For this reason, Theodore writes against the “disciples of Arius and Eunomius” for their insistence that the Logos took a body but not a soul.⁴ In the event that there were to be no human soul in Christ, it would be the divine nature—itself impassible—that would experience human afflictions. It is against the backdrop of Theodore's polemic against Apollinarianism that Nestorius' charges against Cyril must be seen.

In response to calls for him to retract his christological statements made before and at the Council of Ephesus, especially those found in

¹ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:34.¹⁵⁻¹⁶, PG 76:64B). Cf. *ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:90.²¹⁻²⁴, PG 76:205B), *et alia*.

² For a more detailed investigation of the Antiochene tradition, see Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*; R.A. Norris, *Manhood and Christ: A Study in the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Oxford, 1963); A.M. Ritter, ‘Die antiochenische und die alexandrinische Christologie’, in *Handbuch der Dogmen- und Theologiegeschichte*, ed. C. Andresen, 1982, 236-245.

³ See J. O’Keefe, ‘Impassible Suffering? Divine Passion and Fifth-century Christology’, *Theological Studies* 58 (1997), 39-61.

⁴ Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Fifth Catechetical Homily*, 8, as cited and translated in Norris, *Manhood and Christ*, 150. See also Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 426.

the *Anathemas*, Cyril wrote to Acacius of Beroea, saying that his opponents are falsely accusing him of holding to the teachings of Eunomius and Arius, as well as Apollinarius.⁵ He claims that it is the Orientals who have imagined him to follow these heretical notions.⁶ Later, in the important correspondence with Succensus, Cyril again acknowledges that some have accused him of τὰς Απολιναρίου δόξας.⁷ In defending his christology to Acacius of Melitene, he indicates that he affirmed the purely notional distinction of the natures in Christ in the *Formulary of Reunion*, but that he did not affirm their separation. He says this was necessary because the Nestorians had cast the aspersion of Apollinarianism on his letters.⁸ Therefore, not only Nestorius, but even those of the more mainstream Antiochene party levelled the charge of Apollinarianism against Cyril. This suggests that although Nestorius may have been guided by a pursuit of political advancement in his indictment of Cyril, there was genuinely something about Cyril's christology that appeared heretical to the Orientals. To the credit of his accusers, he had borrowed terminology, however unwittingly, from the Apollinarian fragments, most importantly his famous (infamous?) phrase μία φύσις τοῦ Θεοῦ σεσακωμένη.⁹ In addition, his ἕνωσις κατὰ φύσιν and ἕνωσις καθ' ὑπόστασιν plagued him as they were interpreted by the Antiochenes as being Apollinarianism revisited. At least in his language, Cyril was very close to Apollinarius. As mentioned previously, it seems that the Orientals were suspicious of all christology that came from Alexandria, and the use of contradictory, at least to them, vocabulary did not help the situation.

Most of the accusations came in response to Cyril's *Third Letter to Nestorius* and the *Twelve Anathemas* attached to it, which had been sent to Nestorius after his christology had been condemned by a Roman synod in 430. He was to retract his attacks on Θεοτόκος and confess the doctrine of Rome and Alexandria within ten days. He chose not to do so, and instead circulated Cyril's *Anathemas* among the Easterns. Outwith the context of the accompanying letter, both their tone and language were interpreted by the Orientals as being Apollinarian.

⁵ Ep. 33 (ACO 1.1.7:149.²⁰⁻²³).

⁶ Ep. 44 (ACO 1.1.4:35.¹⁸⁻²¹; PG 77:225B).

⁷ Ep. 45 (ACO 1.1.6:152.²⁵; PG 77:232A).

⁸ Ep. 40 (ACO 1.1.4:29.²⁰⁻²¹; PG 77:200A).

⁹ Cyril extracts this phrase from a work entitled Περὶ Σαρκώσεως, which he ascribes to Athanasius, *Oratio ad Dominas* (ACO 1.1.5:65.^{25ff}; PG 76:1212A). Lietzmann includes the text in his collection of Apollinarian fragments (L 250). Cf. Wickham, *Select Letters*, 62 n. 3; McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 207ff.

The Content of the Accusation

The central theme of Apollinarian christology is that Christ does not possess a human mind (ψυχὴ λογική, νοῦς).¹⁰ Instead, the Word has replaced the rational human soul as a divine, rather than human soul.¹¹ Therefore, Christ is still said to be a whole human being (ὅλος ἄνθρωπος) made up of soul and body, but he possesses only a non-rational soul (ψυχὴ ἄλογος).¹² This reveals Apollinarius' tri-partite view of human beings.¹³ That is, a human individual is body, rational soul or mind, and non-rational soul. Nemesius of Emesa also records this as Apollinarian anthropology.¹⁴ Therefore, Apollinarius can say that Christ has a human body and non-rational soul, but has the Word as his mind.¹⁵ Though Christ is a human being in terms of possessing body, soul, and mind, he is still an in-between thing (μεσότης), neither fully God nor fully human, but a mixture (κρᾶσις) of them.¹⁶ Consequently, Christ is ἄνθρωπος because all three necessary components are present. However, he is not said to be *homoousios* with us and with God simultaneously.¹⁷

Is this what Nestorius and the Easterns are accusing Cyril of teaching when they used the term Apollinarianism? They clarify their charge with a variety of descriptions. Though the terms are varied, as we will see, the intended accusation is the same in each instance. There are numerous instances where Cyril records Nestorius' conclusion that his [Cyril's] christology amounts to Apollinarianism. In the first instance, Nestorius is addressing the appellation of Θεοτόκος for the blessed Mary.¹⁸ He indicates that the title is appropriate if used in simple faith, but is inappropriate if used in the manner that Cyril does. Because the term, when used by Cyril, actually conceals heresy, it is to be avoided. He maintains that it is the purpose of Arius, Eunomius, Apollinarius, and others like them who use Θεοτόκος, to claim that a mixture (κρᾶσις) of the natures (φύσεις) has taken place.

¹⁰ See C.E. Raven, *Apollinarianism* (Cambridge, 1923) and A.M. Ritter, 'Die Christologie des Apollinaris von Laodicea' in *Handbuch der Dogmen- und Theologiegeschichte*, 230-236. Cf. Athanasius, *Contra Apollinarem*.

¹¹ Cf. Apollinarius, *Fragments* (L 204, 210, 222, 227, 249, 256).

¹² *Ibid.* (L 194, 210).

¹³ Cf. G.L. Prestige, *Fathers and Heretics* (London, 1940).

¹⁴ Nemesius, *De nat. hom.*, 1.1.

¹⁵ *Fragments* (L 210).

¹⁶ *Ibid.* (L 234).

¹⁷ *Ibid.* (L 244, 214).

¹⁸ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:34.²⁰⁻³¹; PG 76:64D) (=Loofs 272.13-273.17).

This mixture, he says, damages both the humanity (ἀνθρωπότης) and the divinity (Θεότης). In restating the accusation, Cyril says that Nestorius is afraid that by using Θεοτόκος, one will be presupposing a merger (φυρμός) and mixture (ἀνάκρασις) of the natures (ὑποστάσεις).¹⁹

In another place, Cyril says that Nestorius falsely accuses him of heresy, claiming to promote the orthodox faith himself. The accusation is that he teaches a mixture (κράσις) of the natures.²⁰ A mixture, he says, leads to a confusion (ἀνάχυσις) of the components.²¹ An example of this is the mixing together of liquids, such as water and wine. As we will recall, it was Aristotle whose μίξις/κράσις resulted in the combination of water and wine such that the resultant was a *tertium quid*, or confusion of the two original ingredients. In addition, Stoic σύγχυσις also produced an amalgam of the components, which was a compromise of the original properties. As Cyril understands it, the accusation of Apollinarianism is primarily the charge of teaching that Christ is a mixture of divinity and humanity. This brings us to the next nuance of the accusation: an alteration of one or both of the natures. Both Aristotelian μίξις/κράσις and Stoic σύγχυσις mean a change in the constituents. In the case of water and wine—Cyril's own analogy—Aristotle taught that the properties are compromised, i.e., the water and the wine both change from what they are into an in-between thing. The Stoics believed a union of water and wine to be a κράσις in which neither was changed, but their theory of σύγχυσις taught the same thing as Aristotle's μίξις with regard to the alteration of the ingredients. For the Aristotelians, the ingredients are separable because they are present potentially, whereas for the Stoics the constituents are destroyed. In either case, the ingredients are changed within the mixture.

In another place, Nestorius asks why, if indeed the natures had been mixed (κεκραμένον), implying that this is what Cyril taught, did the Lord, in instituting the Eucharist, say, "This is my body", rather than, "This is my divinity".²² Cyril's response is that Nestorius is imagining that he mixes (κατακινώσις) the natures (φύσεις) into one οὐσία.²³ In fact, Cyril says that none in his camp mixes (συγχέοντος) or merges (συνμύροντος) them together.²⁴ Nestorius is correct, Cyril

¹⁹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:34.¹⁵⁻¹⁶; PG 76:64B).

²⁰ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:22.⁷; PG 76:33B).

²¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:22.⁸; PG 76:33B).

²² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:90.²⁵⁻³¹; PG 76:205B) (=Loofs 229.17-230.5).

²³ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:90.²²; PG 76:205B).

²⁴ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:90.²³; PG 76:205B).

says, to insist that a mixture of the natures would mean a change of the Word into the nature of the body (φύσις τοῦ σώματος), and Christ would rightly say, "This is my Godhead, take and eat it".²⁵ However, Christ is not the mixture (κρᾶσις) of the natures.

Nestorius maintains that Cyril's christology presents him with an impossible dilemma.²⁶ He asks those who mix up (κατακινύωσις) into one οὐσία the nature (φύσις) of the divinity and of the humanity, "Who was it that was betrayed and taken captive by the Jews?"²⁷ Was God the Word bound by chains and held captive? Who was crucified? If the mode of union is mixture (κρᾶσις), then God, who cannot die, must be said to have suffered the death. Cyril agrees with Nestorius, saying that any who teach a confusion (ἀνάχυσις) or merger (φωρμός) of the natures err from the truth, because the Word cannot undergo any change.²⁸ Cyril inquires, then, why Nestorius wishes to introduce (παρεισκήρειν) the term κρᾶσις to the discussion. He concludes that it is only to confuse the simple-minded.²⁹

Likewise, Nestorius accuses Cyril of misinterpreting Paul's [sic] statement about the one who became High Priest after the order of Melchisedek. He says that Cyril claims God the Word to have become High Priest to God.³⁰ In contrast, Nestorius maintains that it is the man Jesus who "grew in stature, wisdom, and grace", and subsequently became High Priest. Cyril's error, Nestorius argues, is in mixing up (καταμινγνός) the impassible Logos of God with an earthly body, thus making him a passible High Priest. Cyril denies having mixed the natures, explaining that because the Word has become a human being, and has thereby taken to himself the limitations of humanity, it is therefore not improper to ascribe to him the role of High Priest.³¹

After Ephesus, Cyril writes to Acacius of Beroea that certain people have accused him [Cyril] of holding to the doctrines of Apollinarius or Arius or Eunomius.³² Cyril denies this charge, claiming always to have been orthodox, being trained by an orthodox Father. Furthermore, he anathematizes their heresies, and claims not to profess that the body of Christ was soulless, or that any confusion

²⁵ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:90.⁴⁰; PG 76:205D).

²⁶ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:99.²⁰⁻²⁸; PG 76:229AB) (=Loofs 229.4-16).

²⁷ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:99.²⁰⁻²¹; PG 76:229A).

²⁸ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:99.²⁹⁻³⁰; PG 76:229B).

²⁹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:100.²¹⁻²²; PG 76:232B).

³⁰ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:68.⁹⁻²⁵; PG 76:149A) (=Loofs 235.6-236.14). Citing Hebrews 5:7-10.

³¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:69.^{33ff}; PG 76:152D).

³² *Ep.* 33 (ACO 1.1.7:149.²⁰⁻²¹).

(σύγχυσις), mixture (κράσις), or merger (φυρμός) of the natures took place. On the contrary, the Word cannot undergo change, nor can he suffer in his own nature (ἰδια φύσις).³³

Cyril writes to Acacius Bishop of Melitene responding to the accusations made against his christology. He says that John of Antioch circulated among the Easterns that Cyril affirmed a separation the natures and had divided the sayings of Christ.³⁴ This, he said, has caused a scandal. In explaining the misunderstanding, Cyril reminded the bishop that the Orientals had interpreted his letters as Apollinarian, and believed that he taught that the body of Christ was soulless. In addition, they understood him to claim that a mixture (κράσις), confusion (σύγχυσις), or merger (φυρμός) of the Word and the body had taken place. Furthermore, they accused him of professing a change of the Word (μεταβολή τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγου) into the flesh, or a change of the flesh into the divine nature (τὴν σαρκὸς μεταφύτησις εἰς φύσιν θεότητος).³⁵ The result of a union described by the previous descriptions is that neither nature would remain intact.³⁶ Cyril claims never to have held to the doctrines of Apollinarius or Arius, but has confessed that the Word is immutable, and therefore could not have changed into the flesh. However, he has explained that the natures are conceptually distinguishable, though not separate.³⁷ In addition, he acknowledges that Christ speaks both humanly and divinely, because he is both a human being and God, but the sayings are not attributable to two separate individuals.³⁸

Cyril explains himself further in his letter to Eulogius, an Alexandrian priest residing in Constantinople. He says that the Formula of Reunion between Cyril and the Easterns has caused some to wonder why he signed it. The particular issue was the use of two natures (δύο φύσεις).³⁹ He explains that there is no need to reject everything that a heretic affirms. For example, the Arians affirm that the Father is Creator of the universe; of course, this should not be rejected.⁴⁰ Therefore, to agree with the Easterns in recognising the difference in the natures does not mean that Christ has been divided

³³ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.7:149.²⁶).

³⁴ *Ep.* 40 (ACO 1.1.4:29.^{16ff}; PG 77:200Aff). John's comments are in his *Ep. ad Orientales* (ACO 1.1.7:156.^{34ff}).

³⁵ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.4:29.²⁰⁻²⁴; PG 77:200A).

³⁶ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.4:29.²³; PG 77:200A).

³⁷ Cf. *Ep.* 44 (ACO 1.1.4:35.⁹⁻¹⁸; PG 77:225A).

³⁸ *Ep.* 40 (ACO 1.1.4:30.^{1ff}; PG 77:200B).

³⁹ *Ep.* 44 (ACO 1.1.4:35.¹⁻⁵; PG 77:225A).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.4:35.⁷⁻¹⁰; PG 77:225A).

into two individuals. However, he argues, the Orientals considered him to hold the doctrines of Apollinarius, meaning that a mixture (σύγκρασις) or confusion (σύγχυσις) of the natures had occurred.⁴¹ This implies that God the Word was changed into the nature of the flesh, and the flesh was changed into the nature of divinity. Cyril denies that a mixture had taken place. Instead, he points the reader to Athanasius, who argued that the natures were not *homoousios* with one another.⁴² Cyril claims that the orthodox Easterns (excluding Nestorius, of course) are in agreement with Athanasius and himself, believing that Christ is one, though the natures are not fused together. Their language was inadequate, but their christology was orthodox. Consequently, he is able to affirm the Formulary of Reunion.

In the important correspondence with Succensus, written some time after Ephesus, Cyril writes that some people are still charging him with teaching the doctrines of Apollinarius.⁴³ The accusation is that by saying the Word of God become a human being is ‘one Son’, he implies that a fusion (σύγχυσις) or mixture (σύγκρασις) or merger (φωρμός) of the Word with the body, or that the nature of the body has been changed into (μεταβολή) the divinity. Cyril says that he denies this accusation by confessing that the Logos ineffably united a body with a rational human soul to himself, and became a human being. Consequently, he and the other orthodox unite (ἐνοῦντες) the Word of God ineffably to σάρξ with a rational human soul, and maintain that this union is without confusion (ἀσυγχύτως), without mutation (ἀτρέπτως), and without change (ἀμεταβλήτως).⁴⁴

Although both Cyril and his accusers employ a number of different terms, each is meant to denote Apollinarianism. This heresy, at least as Cyril understood the charge levelled against him, was that the Word of God and the flesh had been fused together—like water and wine mixed together. This process, according to Nestorius and the other Easterns, resulted in Christ being a *tertium quid*, in which he was neither completely God nor completely human. Either the Word changed into the flesh, or the humanity was diminished in some way, such as the removal of the human mind. In either case, Christ would then be an amalgam of the two natures.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.4:35.¹⁹⁻²⁰; PG 77:225B).

⁴² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.4:36.^{4ff}; PG 77:225C).

⁴³ *Ep.* 45 (ACO 1.1.6:152.^{24ff}; PG 77:232AB).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:153.⁷⁻⁸; PG 77:232C). Contained here are two of the four adverbs from the Chalcedonian Definition (ACO 2.1:325.³⁰).

It is important to note that Apollinarius himself did use the terms κῥᾱσις, μίξις, and σύγκρασις to describe the Incarnation.⁴⁵ Norris interprets him to mean by these terms the Stoic theory of κῥᾱσις.⁴⁶ In other words, the Logos is said to co-exist mutually with the body, with each set of properties being retained by the resultant, i.e., Christ. But Apollinarius denies that two complete (τέλειος) natures were joined. Instead, there is no human mind in Christ as he deemed it necessary for the Logos to be the sole agent in the Incarnate experience.⁴⁷ The disallowance of a human mind, then, is not based on a physical need, but a theological one. That is, Apollinarius does not remove the soul from Christ because he is trying to explain how two things can be in the same place at the same time—he has that with Stoic κῥᾱσις—but he needs to explain how all the actions of Christ can be applied to the Logos while simultaneously avoiding a mere juxtaposition of the natures. However, Apollinarius was not the only pre-Nestorian Controversy Father to use “mixture” language to describe Christ. Gregory Nazianzen, in a staunchly anti-Apollinarian work, writes, “Both things [divinity and humanity] are made one by the mixture (σύγκρασις).”⁴⁸ How can the same term be used in both an orthodox manner, as by Gregory, and an unorthodox manner, as by Apollinarius? Cyril says it is because the orthodox Fathers did not use it technically, but wanted to emphasise the intimacy of the union.⁴⁹ In other words, Gregory’s use of the term is a metaphorical use, intended to emphasise that in Christ the humanity and the divinity are indeed united. Scripture also employs this term in the same non-technical and metaphorical manner, Cyril claims. This reminds us that biblical and theological language is to be seen within its context, and in the light of the clarifications made to christological formulae by the images related to them.

The fact that the Easterns found Cyril’s christology so offensive that they would brand it Apollinarian reinforces the notion that the Antiochenes were never satisfied fully with Alexandrian efforts to distance themselves from the heresy. They appear to have been wary of any christological language that sounded the least bit like that of the Apollinarians. Consequently, Cyril’s confusing terminology, such as

⁴⁵ Apollinarius, *Fragments* (L 239, L 246, L 207, L 206). For a study of both the orthodox and unorthodox use of these scientific terms, see Wolfson, 387ff.

⁴⁶ R.A. Norris, *Manhood and Christ* (Oxford, 1963), 106.

⁴⁷ Apollinarius, *Fragments* (L 224, L 247, 151, 247f.). Cf. Raven, *Apollinarianism*.

⁴⁸ *Ep.* 101 (PG 37:176-193).

⁴⁹ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:22.^{7ff.}; PG 76:33A-C).

his *ἔνωσις κατὰ φύσιν*, was readily interpreted in this light. The strong and controversial language of the *Anathemas*, particularly when removed from the context of the letter they accompanied to Nestorius, gave clear signs of being Apollinarian, in tenor if not in fact. In addition, Cyril's unwitting use of Apollinarian formulae such as the *μία φύσις* would naturally be seen as heretical. The Easterns claimed that if there is one nature of the Word Incarnate (*εἰ μία φύσις τοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη*), then Christ is the source of a merger (*φυρμός*) or mixture (*σύγκρασις*) of the natures, in which the human nature was diminished.⁵⁰ Cyril's response is important, and needs to be quoted at length:

If the Word was born ineffably from God the Father and then came forth as a human being (*ἄνθρωπος*) from a woman after having assumed flesh, not soulless but rationally animated flesh; and if it is the case that he is in nature and in truth one single Son, then he cannot be divided into two personas or two sons, but has remained one, though he is no longer fleshless or outside the body but now possess his very own body in an indissoluble union. How could saying this possibly imply that there was any consequent necessity of merger (*φυρμός*) or confusion (*σύγχυσις*) or anything else like this? For if we say that the Only Begotten Son of God, who was incarnate and became a human being, is One, then this does not mean as they would suppose that he has been 'merged' (*πέφυρται*) or that the nature of the Word has been transformed into the nature of the flesh, or that of the flesh into the Word's. No, each nature is understood to remain in all its natural characteristics for the reasons we have just given....⁵¹

As we have seen previously, the appellation *Θεοτόκος* implied for Nestorius that the Alexandrian conceived of the Incarnation as the result of a fusion of God the Word with humanity. Otherwise, how could Mary give birth to God? This provided Nestorius and the other Orientals with their most decisive evidence against Cyril. Along with insisting that Mary was truly the Mother of God—that is, God the Word become human—Cyril sought to explain the seemingly paradoxical behaviour of Christ. For example, he both raised the dead, and he died on the cross. On a few occasions, he walked on water, but on others, he rode in a boat. How is this paradox to be explained? Nestorius had responded with his idea of *συνάφεια* in which the Logos performed and experienced those things normally attributable to God, and the man Jesus experienced the human activities. In

⁵⁰ *Ep.* 46 (ACO 1.1.6:159.⁹⁻¹⁰; PG 76:241A).

⁵¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:159.¹²⁻²¹; PG 76:241AB). This is substantially McGuckin's translation.

contrast, Cyril attributed all the actions of Christ, both the divine and the human, to the Word become human.⁵² The glory that belongs to the Word as God, for instance, is attributed to Christ. This is so, Cyril argues, because Christ is the Word of God become a human being. He is not the Logos connected to or dwelling in a human individual, but is a human being himself. Therefore, the Word knows even the sufferings of Christ, because Christ is none other than the Logos become a human being. Cyril's fourth anathema in his *Third Letter to Nestorius* reads, "Whoever allocates the terms contained in the gospels and apostolic writings and applied to Christ by the saints or used of himself by himself to two persons (προσώπα) or subjects (ὑποστάσεις) and attaches some to the human individual considered separately from the Word of God, some to the divine Word of God the Father alone, shall be anathema".⁵³ All of Christ's actions and properties belong to the one person of God the Word incarnate. This view is a logical result of the conception of a union in which there is only one individual—Christ. In writing to Acacius of Melitene, Cyril says, "Do not then divide the terms applied to the Lord here (for they possess at the same time divine and human application) but attribute them rather to the one Son, that is God the Word incarnate".⁵⁴ He does acknowledge that it is acceptable to *conceptualise* that some things were done and said by Christ *in his humanity*, and others *in his divinity*, but adamantly opposes a separation of the two natures after the Incarnation. Instead, he argues that because Christ is one, his words and actions are to be attributed to him, the one Son, rather than to the Word as one person and a separate human individual as another. Later, Cyril states that the Fathers distinguish the terms, "not by dividing the one Son and Lord into two, but by ascribing some terms to his Godhead, and some in turn to his humanity; nevertheless all belong to one subject".⁵⁵ The danger in such a doctrine, as pointed out by Nestorius, is the inference that this divine-human person was a new creature, unlike the divine and human natures from which he was composed. It is easy to see how one could conclude such, especially since this was the conclusion of Apollinarius. There is little surprise, then, in seeing that Nestorius interpreted Cyril's affirmation of the so-called exchange of properties as Apollinarian; particularly when expressed in statements such as his final anathema against

⁵² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.4:29.⁶⁻¹⁵; PG 77:197CD); *Ep.* 45 (ACO 1.1.6:151.^{13ff}; PG 77:229A).

⁵³ *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:41.¹⁻⁴; PG 77:120CD).

⁵⁴ *Ep.* 40 (ACO 1.1.4:28.¹⁷⁻¹⁹; PG 77:197A).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.4:29.¹³⁻¹⁵; PG 77:197D).

Nestorius: that the Word of God suffered, was crucified, died, and was raised from the dead.⁵⁶ Even with Cyril's qualification that these things happened to the Word "σαρκί" the statement sounds very much as if he believes that God the Word actually suffered and died *qua* God.

Cyril insists that Christ is one living individual (μία φύσις)—the Word of God incarnate. One must not confuse conceptual acknowledgement that some of Christ's actions are done in respect to his divinity and others to his humanity, with the reality that all Christ's actions and words belong to Christ, who is one, not two. In explaining how one could say that the Word died in the flesh, Cyril writes that he [the Word] did not suffer in his own nature [his divinity], but through τὸ ἴδιον σῶμα αὐτοῦ.⁵⁷ The sufferings which the body of Christ suffered directly are attributed to the Word as a result of the genuine union (ἔνωσις καθ' ὑπόστασιν). In the next paragraph of the *Second Letter to Nestorius* he states, "In this way we shall confess one Christ and Lord, not worshipping a separate human individual along with the Word but one and the same Christ".⁵⁸ There is but one worship, and that of Christ. Cyril rejected Nestorius' notion that the man Jesus is worshipped as a result of his association with the Word. For Cyril this could only mean two "worships", one for the Word and one for the man Jesus. Instead, Christ is worshipped as one because "the Word's body is not dissociated (μὴ ἀλλότριον) from Him."⁵⁹

His problem with Nestorius was Nestorius' apparent acceptance of two independent, self-sustaining existents in Christ. For Cyril this could not be the case. Instead, the one individual (μία φύσις) was God the Word. However, in becoming a human being the Word took on a human nature, but was not connected to an ordinary, individual human being. Therefore, it was acceptable, we have seen, for Cyril to say that in Christ there were two natures—divine and human—but simultaneously confess μία φύσις. Apollinarius had attributed all of the actions of Christ to one person, but had done so through a different means. His model of an "incomplete human being" allowed him to confess Christ to be one person. Only he was then a *tertium quid*. This was unacceptable to the orthodox Alexandrians and

⁵⁶ *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:42.³⁻⁴; PG 77:122D).

⁵⁷ *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:27.²⁰; PG 77:48A).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:28.^{3ff}; PG 77:48B). For a study of the Incarnation's effects on worship see T. F. Torrance, 'The Mind of Christ in Worship', in *Theology in Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids, 1975), 139-214.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:20.⁵; PG 77:48B).

Antiochenes alike. For Nestorius the only way to achieve the Alexandrian notion of a single subject in the Incarnation was to merge and mix the two natures, thus producing a Christ who is an in-between thing, neither fully God nor fully human. Cyril denies Nestorius' claim that the only two options for describing the Incarnation are juxtaposition (συνάφεια, σύνθεσις) and mixture (μίξις, κράσις). Instead, he says that there is another way.⁶⁰ His explanation was a source of disdain from Nestorius. Cyril professed that all the experiences of Christ, including his sufferings and death, are properly attributable to the Word of God. However, it was unthinkable for Nestorius to conceive of God being born, needing feeding, or growing in stature. It was blasphemy to say that he suffered and died, as Cyril had done so poignantly in the *Anathemas*.⁶¹ Nestorius never retreated from this accusation.

*Images in the Context of Cyril's Denial*⁶²

Cyril employs three analogies that demonstrate that mixture and confusion have not taken place. The first of these is the Burning Bush. God came to Moses in the form of fire resting on a bush, but not destroying it. Normally the fire would destroy the shrub, but in this instance it did not; God was able to burn a bush without consuming it. This is a mysterious divine act. In the same way, God the Word is said to become a human being without either changing himself or destroying the flesh.⁶³ This is not an impossibility for God, even though our finite minds can not comprehend it. Just as God mysteriously rested on the bush as fire without consuming it, so too did God become a human being without altering or destroying the humanity. The second image is that of the Ark of the Covenant.⁶⁴ Cyril uses it to demonstrate "that the Word comes into a true union with the humanity, wherein the things so united still remain unconfused". The wood is a type of the body and the gold a type of the divine nature. The wooden Ark is then covered completely with the gold, both inside and out. That the Word is united to flesh is shown by the outward covering, and that he possessed a soul is demonstrated by the inward covering. We know that the natures were unconfused

⁶⁰ We will see the alternative to these two proposals in Part Three.

⁶¹ *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:42.³⁻⁵, PG 76:121D).

⁶² These images are examined in greater detail in the final three chapters.

⁶³ *QUSC* (PG 75:1293A).

⁶⁴ *Scholia* (PG 75:1380D-1381B).

because the gold that covered the wood remained what it was as did the wood; neither was altered nor destroyed. The Ark was one entity that had been formed from the wood and the gold, just as Christ is one from humanity and divinity. The image is not intended to illustrate the manner of union, but to demonstrate that neither nature was altered. Cyril's final image is his favourite one, body and soul. Cyril says that when a person is killed, it is said that one person dies, and not two.⁶⁵ This is because two things—body and soul—have become one. However, the union is not by confusion (συγχέων) or mixture (ἀνακρινῶν), but by ineffable means whereby both remain intact. So also Christ is an ineffable union of God the Word and humanity wherein the difference of the natures is not ignored, but they are neither separated, on the one hand, nor fused together, on the other.

We have seen that the charge against Cyril of Apollinarianism was an accusation that he taught the Incarnation to be a mixture (μίξις) resulting in a *tertium quid*. But what of this concept; why is a confusion of the natures, in which Christ is an in-between thing, unacceptable to Cyril? There are two questions in the previous sentence, and we will take the former one first. Why does Cyril not utilise the concept of μίξις or κρᾶσις in his christology? He could have used it non-technically, as other orthodox Fathers had done, but instead he chose otherwise. We can only assume that even a non-technical usage does not give him what he is looking for in either a description of the Incarnation or a means to illustrate his description. It would surely emphasise the intimacy of the union, as it had for others, but it overlooked an important component of proper christology; namely, the presence of perfect divinity and perfect humanity in Christ. He opted for the term ἕνωσις rather than any type of technical mixture language because he found in it precisely what he was looking for: a way to describe one individual comprised of two complete and undiminished natures.⁶⁶

We have seen why Cyril rejects μίξις/κρᾶσις as a non-technical description of the Incarnation, but we must also step back and discover why he rejected the underlying concept. As we saw with juxtaposition, Cyril refuses to allow the union of God and humanity in Christ to be perceived as a technical method of union. It is inexpli-

⁶⁵ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:42.²⁷⁻³⁰; PG 76:85A). Cf. *QUSC* (PG 75:1292A); *Ep.* 46 (ACO 1.1.6:160.⁴; PG 77:241B).

⁶⁶ Chapter Eight addresses more both why Cyril chose ἕνωσις and what he expected to get out of it.

cable, and therefore no theory of combination describes it adequately. This is no less true with theories of mixture. The reason why technical modes of union are unacceptable is the fundamental premise that they describe two pre-existent individuals being joined together. This was a pre-requisite for each of Aristotle's theories of combination. But Cyril denies that the Incarnation was the joining of two pre-existent individuals. He says instead that it is the Word becoming a human being, and not an existing human person being deified.⁶⁷ Otherwise, God the Word would have been united to another human being, an ordinary person like us. We have already seen in the previous chapter why this is an inaccurate representation of the *mysterium Christi*.

The most important reason why Cyril rejects *μίξις* and *κράσις*, and their conceptual derivatives, is the implication that Christ is a *tertium quid*. This idea is reprehensible because it implies that either the Word or the humanity, or both, are somehow incomplete. It is obvious that the Logos cannot be said to have changed or been diminished in any way because as God he is immutable. To imply that somehow the nature of the Word was changed into the nature of humanity is absurd in Cyril's mind: Christ, the Word become a human being, is *homoousios* with God. In his *Anathemas*, Cyril denounces those who do not confess Emmanuel to be truly God (Θεὸς κατὰ ἀλήθειαν), and thus Mary to be Θεοτόκος.⁶⁸ He is following the Nicene Fathers who once and for all pronounced Christ to be "very God of very God". He also condemns those who say that Christ is a God-bearing human being (θεοφόρος ἄνθρωπος) rather than that he is truly God (Θεὸς κατὰ ἀλήθειαν) and Son of God by nature (φύσει).⁶⁹ As Son of God, and thus true God from true God (Θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ), there is not a time when he did not exist, nor did he come into existence at the time of the Incarnation.⁷⁰ Cyril can make such statements only because of his insistence that Christ is none other than the Word of God himself become flesh. Christ is not a *tertium quid* whose existence began in Bethlehem, but is the eternal Logos of God become a human being. The Lord Jesus Christ is the same individual—that is, the Word of God—both before and after the Incarnation; he has undergone no change.⁷¹ Therefore, he is not

⁶⁷ *Answers to Tiberius* (W 158).

⁶⁸ *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:40.²²⁻²⁴; PG 77:120B).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:41.⁵⁻⁷; PG 77:120D).

⁷⁰ *Ep.* 55 (ACO 1.1.4:51.²⁷⁻²⁹; PG 77:296C).

⁷¹ *Ep.* 45 (ACO 1.1.5:152.¹²⁻²⁴; PG 77:229Df).

inferior to the Father, but equal to him in that they are of the same *ousia*.⁷² Jesus Christ is the Word of God who has become a human being, and has therefore not left behind his deity, but continues to be God even in human life. What he was prior to the Incarnation—the eternal Word of God, *homoousios* with the Father—he continues to be.⁷³ Cyril is emphasising that a mixture of the natures implies that the Godhead has been changed into something other than complete divinity. However, the Word as God is immutable and cannot therefore undergo alteration into something less than perfect God. For this reason the notion of Christ as a *κρᾶσις* or *μίξις* is unacceptable.

On the other hand, it could be possible for the Word to remain intact, but for the humanity to be altered instead. If one must find a way to glue together two pieces of a christological puzzle, one would certainly wish to preserve the integrity of the Word at any cost. This, of course, is the solution proposed by Apollinarius. For the heretic, removing the human soul from Christ and replacing it with the Logos could solve the puzzle. This not only produces a single individual, but also solves the dilemma of a duality of wills in Christ. Inherent in Cyril's denial of Apollinarianism, and therefore mixture, merger, and confusion of the natures, is a rejection of the idea that the human nature of Christ is incomplete, i.e., that the Word replaces the human soul.

Ultimately, Cyril rejects *κρᾶσις* because it does not describe properly the relationship between the natures in Christ. It proposes a relationship in which at least one of the natures is changed by the union. The Word might become less than God through a change into flesh, or the flesh could be without a soul and thus incomplete. Either way, Christ is a compromise between the two and unable to save. The relationship between Word and body must not be conceived as a puzzle in which two pieces are somehow glued together. Instead, Christ is the Word who has become a human being, and therefore possesses ownership of his body, making it his own. The model of mixture presupposes that the natures which comprise Christ are two individuals who must be united by a particular process. In this chapter, we see that Cyril rejects this notion of a technical relationship wherein either of the natures is diminished.

⁷² *Ep.* 55 (ACO 1.1.4:53.¹¹⁻¹⁴; PG 77:300BC).

⁷³ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.4:53.^{35ff}, 54.^{34ff}; PG 77:301A^{ff}).

Concluding Remarks

We have seen that when faced with the accusation of Apollinarianism, Cyril responded with a clear and unequivocal denial. He interpreted the charge to mean that either the Word or the humanity, or both, had changed in order to unite. One scenario was that the Logos of God has turned into flesh, having his very *ousia* altered in order to become human. Also, the flesh could have been changed into divinity, or have been heavenly, rather than earthly flesh. Finally, Cyril could have meant, according to his accusers, that the human soul was removed to make space for the Word. All of these possibilities are rejected by Cyril. He claims that the Word is immutable. In addition, Christ must be fully God and fully human in order to save.

The most illuminating image applied to the heresy is that of water and wine being mixed. For him, when two liquids are poured together they are each compromised, so as to produce an in-between thing, which is not fully either of the ingredients. This type of process is described by the terms discussed above. Consequently, neither the process nor its descriptions are properly applied to the Incarnation. The Word and flesh were not mixed in the same way that water and wine are mixed. There is no correlation between the two events. In contrast, Cyril maintains that the term ἕνωσις does describe the Incarnation. This particular process is illustrated by the analogies of the Ark of the Covenant, the burning bush, and the body and soul of a human individual. In each image, Cyril sets out to demonstrate that the natures were not compromised to produce Christ. Therefore, Christ is as completely human as he is divine; there is no diminishing of either.

In the two preceding chapters we have been interested in discovering why Cyril rejected the two heresies which were dominant in the controversy with Nestorius. The first heresy he recognised in Nestorius' christology. Cyril interpreted the Bishop of Constantinople's use of συνάφεια to mean a juxtaposition of God the Word and a separate human being, the man Jesus. This was, in his estimation, a revival of the two-Sons doctrine of Diodore of Tarsus. Nestorius' conception of Christ as one unit by means of the Word of God's gracious bestowal of the title and dignity of Sonship to the human person is explicitly rejected by Cyril as heresy. Additional language such as the Word dwelling in the man Jesus, or using him as his instrument does nothing to salvage Nestorius' christology in Cyril's mind. A συνάφεια is a technical notion of union, and therefore requires two pre-existent constituents. If Christ is formed from a pre-existent and self-sufficient human being, though joined to the Word,

then the ownership of the human experiences of Christ belong to him and not to the Logos of God. This does not allow for the saving death of the Word of God Incarnate. The picture of Christ which Nestorius paints preserves the impassibility of the Word and the completeness of the humanity, but destroys the unity of Christ, making him two individuals rather than one.

The second heresy we examined was Apollinarianism; that is, the idea of a *μίξις* or *κρᾶσις* of the natures. It is this heresy which Nestorius and other Easterns perceived in Cyril's christology. This accusation stemmed primarily from his *Anathemas* and formulae central to his picture of Christ that were taken from forged Apollinarian documents that Cyril thought were from Athanasius. The charge was that the natures had been compromised to form Christ. In other words, the humanity or the divinity—or both—was changed to make union possible. Apollinarius' own conception had been that the Logos replaced the human mind in Christ, thereby making him both God and human. Christ is then an in-between thing, who is not a complete human being (*τέλειος ἄνθρωπος*). The soteriological implications of this are enormous. Christ must be *homoousios* both with us and with God to be our mediator and Saviour. The relationship between the natures in a *μίξις* or *κρᾶσις* creates an intimate union, but does not preserve the natures intact. Christ is one individual, but he is an amalgam of divinity and humanity, not both in their entirety. Cyril of course, rejects this charge.

The question of how to understand the *ἔνωσις* of God and humanity in Christ is ultimately how properly to describe the conception that Christ is one individual (*μία φύσις*). Nestorius' answer was to say that Christ is an aggregate of God and the man Jesus, which Cyril illustrates with the image a student-teacher partnership. He says that Christ is not 'one' in this way. In other words, Christ is not a collective unity such as that formed when student and his teacher join one another in the pursuit of learning, and are thus one participative unit. If this image illustrates the *ἔνωσις*, then Christ is two individuals, and not one. Apollinarianism, on the other hand, answered the question by fusing the two natures together. However, Cyril says that Christ is not 'one' in the same way that water and wine are mixed together to form a *tertium quid*. If the mixture (*κρᾶσις/μίξις*) of two liquids illustrates the *ἔνωσις*, then Christ is an amalgam of God and humanity. In either case, he is a Christ who cannot save.

These leads us to conclude that three observations can be made about the pictures of Christ which Cyril rejects. First, Cyril rejects any technical notion of coming together such as *παράθεσις*, *κρᾶσις*, *μίξις*, and similar theories. How God the Word became a human

being is ineffable, known only to God. In addition, applying a technical theory to the Incarnation would, in Cyril's mind, require the presence of a pre-existent and separate human being in the equation. This brings an ordinary human being into the realm of redemption. Second, he rejects any picture of Christ in which ownership of the human experiences of Christ does not rest with the Word of God Incarnate. For the passion of Christ to be atoning, it must be the impassible death of the Logos. The death of an ordinary human being would not suffice. Finally, he rejects the idea that one or both of the natures must be diminished for Christ to be one individual. Christ must be complete God and completely human. There can be no replacement of the rational human soul of Christ with the Word. These are the christological answers that Cyril rejects. In the next part we will examine the answer which he himself gives as to who Christ is.

PART THREE

A RE-CONSTRUCTION OF CYRIL'S CHRISTOLOGY

CHAPTER SIX

THE INCARNATE WORD: USING IMAGERY TO ILLUSTRATE THAT CHRIST IS Θεός

The next three chapters, comprising Part Three, are the centrepiece of this work. Whereas in Parts One and Two we developed our foundation, in this final part we will build upon that basis with an examination of Cyril's use of imagery to illustrate his description of the person and work of Christ. Our methodology will be simple. The first two chapters are descriptive in nature. Chapter Six will summarise Cyril's illustration of Christ as truly God (Θεὸς ἀληθῶς). We will see that Cyril believes the Word to be the same both before and after the Incarnation. Chapter Seven will then summarise his understanding of Christ as a complete human being (ἄνθρωπος τέλειος). We will focus on the presence or absence of a rational human soul in Christ. The final chapter will examine Cyril's answer to the christological dilemmas presented in Chapters Six and Seven; namely, how one individual can be both truly God and truly human (*Deus vere, homo vere*), how human flesh can be said to be miracle working and life giving, and how the impassible Logos of God can experience a human death. We will see that Cyril answers each question with his conception of ἕνωσις, which is not a technical process, but a dynamic relationship whereby the Word of God unites to himself ineffably a human nature, and thus a human body and soul. The Logos is then owner of the humanity. In this union of possession, the experiences and actions of the flesh are those of the Word, and the Word in turn uses his flesh to accomplish his purpose of redemption. It is the element of possession which defines, for Cyril, the union of God and humanity in Christ.

Cyril's Description of Christ as Θεός

The Fathers at Nicaea had confessed one God, the Almighty Father, maker of all things both visible and invisible, the one Lord Jesus Christ his Son, and the Holy Spirit. In addition, they said that the Son of God, being himself true God from true God (ἐκ Θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ Θεὸς ἀληθινός), became Incarnate (σαρκωθῆναι) and became a hu-

man being (ἐνανθρωπήσαι).¹ Nicaea was the definitive statement concerning the orthodox belief in the deity of the Son. He is *homoousios* with the Father, and true God from true God. The christological differences of Cyril and Nestorius were not about the deity of the Word of God, as both accepted the orthodox statement of Nicaea. Even Apollinarianism did not seek to diminish the integrity of the Logos. Consequently, this chapter is not an inquiry into Cyril's Trinitarian theology, and his understanding of the deity of the Word of God. He was not looking for a manner to illustrate that the Word was *homoousios* with the Father. For him, that question had been settled at Nicaea. We, therefore, begin with the presupposition that the Logos is true God. The central issue of the christological controversy of the fifth century is not the deity of the Logos *per se*, but the deity of Jesus Christ. How 'divine' was this person called Jesus of Nazareth? Was he *homoousios* with God or not? As we will discover in the final chapter, these questions were of supreme importance to the christological debate in which Cyril found himself, and in which we find the expression of his own christological understanding. He is not arguing for the recognition of the Son's divinity. This is taken for granted, as it is stated plainly in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. The disagreement is over the divinity of Jesus Christ. This chapter will examine the analogies in which Cyril illustrates his understanding of the deity of Christ. We will see that his picture of Christ as true God (Θεὸς ἀληθῶς/ἀληθινός/κατὰ ἀλήθειαν) and God by nature (Θεὸς κατὰ φύσιν) are derived from his conception of Christ as the Word become a human being without any change in his divine nature. It is not the person of the Logos that is in question, but the person of Christ the Saviour. As we will see, however, Cyril draws a necessary connection between the two.

Cyril states clearly and explicitly that proper faith is the confession of Christ as truly God (ὁ Χριστὸς ἐστὶν Θεὸς ἀληθῶς).² He finds and lists a number of passages from Scripture which he interprets as affirming the complete divinity of Emmanuel. He gives these in a large section of his *Scholia de Incarnatione Unigeniti* that he entitles, *Dicta apostolica in quibus Deus nominatus est Christus*.³ He firstly says that the mystery of Christ was not known by the sons of men in the same way that it has been revealed to the holy apostles.⁴ Coupled with this

¹ Cited in Cyril's *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:17.^{2ff}, PG 76:296D); *inter alia*.

² *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:18.¹⁸, PG 76:24D).

³ *Scholia* (PG 75:1392D-1396B). Extant only in Latin.

⁴ Ephesians 3:5.

passage is the statement that Christ is the riches of the glory of this recently revealed mystery.⁵ Christ is not a Θεοφόρος, as someone who is merely bearing God would not be preached as the riches of the glory of the mystery. Rather, these two passages reveal that Christ is true God (*Deus vere*). The next passage Cyril cites speaks of the mystery of God and of Christ.⁶ Because the same mystery is said to be that of God as well as that of Christ, Cyril draws the conclusion that God is Christ. In addition, Paul added that his desire was for his readers fully to understand the mystery. Cyril reasons that if Christ were only God dwelling in a human being (*Deus inhabitaret in homine*), there would be no urgency for understanding it fully. However, there is a pressing need to understand this mystery, because Christ is the Word, who is God, become a human being (*Verbum, cum sit Deus, factum sit homo*). Another passage records the Apostle Paul's commendation of the Thessalonians' faith in God.⁷ In another place, Scripture records Christ's claim that eternal life is gained by placing one's faith in him [Christ].⁸ From these two passages, Cyril concludes that Christ is God. Next, he cites a text in which Paul speaks of preaching the gospel of God.⁹ Cyril reminds the reader that Paul preached Christ to the Gentiles. Therefore, he maintains, Christ is God. He then cites two passages from the same chapter of Thessalonians in which preaching about Christ is called the gospel of God and the word of God.¹⁰ In another text, Paul speaks of awaiting the hope and coming of the glory of the great God and the Saviour Jesus Christ.¹¹ Cyril claims that this passage quite clearly calls Christ God. Christ cannot be a *homo* Θεοφόρος and be the great God, for Scripture says, "Cursed is the one who puts his faith in a man".¹² Moreover, Paul claims to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.¹³ This gospel is called the gospel of Christ. Cyril interprets this as affirming that Jesus Christ is God. In addition, there are passages of Scripture which speak of Christ's power to know the hearts of people,¹⁴ to forgive sins,¹⁵ to

⁵ Colossians 1:26-28.

⁶ Colossians 2:1-2.

⁷ 1 Thessalonians 1:8.

⁸ John 6:47.

⁹ 1 Thessalonians 2:1-2.

¹⁰ 1 Thessalonians 2:9, 13.

¹¹ Titus 2:11-13.

¹² Jeremiah 17:5. The Greek term Θεοφόρος is retained in the Latin.

¹³ Galatians 1:6-8; 2:1-2

¹⁴ John 2:23-25.

¹⁵ Matthew 9:6.

offer the sacrifice for sin.¹⁶ Also, the Law commanded that only the Lord God should be worshipped.¹⁷ Because the Law is intended to lead its hearers to Christ, Cyril interprets this to mean that Christ is God, and therefore should be worshipped as God. By cross-referencing these texts, Cyril is able to conclude that Jesus Christ is God the Word, and is not a *homo* Θεοφόρος, like other saints, but is true God (*Deus vere*)¹⁸

Cyril's understanding of Jesus Christ as true God (Θεός ἀληθῶς) can best be seen in his polemic against Nestorius. In contrast to his own christology, Cyril believes that the christology of Nestorius is something other than the faith of the Scriptures and Nicaea.¹⁹ If we read the *Anathemas* of Cyril as polemical statements against the Antiochene, as they surely were intended, the first statement accuses Nestorius of not confessing Emmanuel to be true God (Θεός κατὰ ἀλήθειαν).²⁰ He also includes an anathema against those [presumably Nestorius] who consider Christ to be a God-bearing individual (Θεοφόρος) rather than true God (Θεός κατὰ ἀλήθειαν) and Son of God by nature (φύσει).²¹ An additional condemnation is pronounced against those who call the Word of God the Lord of Christ, rather than recognising that Christ is God the Word.²² Cyril cites Nestorius as claiming that the Virgin ought to be called Χριστοτόκος rather than Θεοτόκος because Scripture does not, in Nestorius' view, teach that God was born of Mary, but that Christ was.²³ Cyril infers from this that the Antiochene believes that Christ is someone other than God. His conclusion from this statement is that Nestorius teaches Christ to be a Θεοφόρος ἄνθρωπος rather than truly God (Θεός ἀληθῶς).²⁴ Cyril's opponents reject Θεοτόκος, preferring instead the

¹⁶ Hebrews 9:26.

¹⁷ Deuteronomy 13:16.

¹⁸ *Scholia* (PG 75:1396A). See also *ibid.* (PG 75:1401A-1403A, 1403C-1404B); *Ep.* 55 (ACO 1.1.4:55.¹²⁻⁶¹,¹⁸; PG 77:304D-320A). For more on Cyril's use of cross-referencing to discover christological statements and descriptions in Scripture, see Chapter Two. When he finds a passage in which a statement is made that correspond with a description of Christ found elsewhere in Scripture, Cyril is able to link the referent of the first passage to Christ. In other words, if a = b, and b = c, then a = c. For example, if saving faith is said to be faith in God in one text, and faith in Christ in another, then, Cyril concludes, Christ is God. Cf. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Foundation of the Christian Church*.

¹⁹ See Chapter Four.

²⁰ *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:40.²²⁻²⁴; PG 77:120C).

²¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:41.⁵⁻⁷; PG 77:120D).

²² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:41.⁸⁻¹⁰; PG 77:121A).

²³ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:²⁴⁻³⁵; PG 76:24Df); (=Loofs 277.^{19-278.2, 5-7}).

²⁴ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:18.³⁷; PG 76:25A).

appellation of Χριστοτόκος for the Virgin. This, he says, is blasphemy, for it denies that Christ is truly God (Θεὸς ἀληθῶς) and truly Son (Υἱὸς ἀληθῶς).²⁵

The theological heart of Cyril's controversy with Nestorius was the question of whether or not Mary, the mother of Jesus, is to be given the title Θεοτόκος. It is in his defence of this appellation that we find Cyril's clearest description of Christ as true God (Θεὸς ἀληθινός). Cyril maintains that in rejecting Θεοτόκος, Nestorius was necessarily denying the deity of Christ. In doing so, in the mind of Cyril, the Antiochene had distanced himself from the orthodox faith of Nicaea and the Scriptures. Because Θεοτόκος was the focal point of Cyril's insistence that Nestorius denied the deity of Christ, it will be of benefit to see how Cyril defended the application of the title to the Virgin.

Cyril writes to the monks of Egypt, in response to Nestorius' sermon against Θεοτόκος, that his desire is for them to be orthodox and pure in their faith.²⁶ He has heard that the question of whether or not Mary should be called Θεοτόκος has been presented to them. This is an absurd question, and the simple monks should not even be pondering a question so subtle as this. Cyril is awe-struck that anyone would even doubt the veracity of Θεοτόκος as an appellation for Mary.²⁷ If Jesus is God, then how is his mother not the Mother of God? Cyril then gives them two quotations from Athanasius in which the great Patriarch referred to Mary as Θεοτόκος.²⁸ Athanasius would never contradict Scripture, and he can therefore be trusted, along with the Nicene Fathers. Although the Fathers at Nicaea did not explicitly use the title Θεοτόκος, Cyril sets out to demonstrate that their confession makes it an appropriate appellation. He quotes the Nicene Creed and then launches into an attack on those who consider the Son of God to be a part of creation, and only slightly greater than other creatures.²⁹ They have removed him from his place of honour and equality with the Father, and say that he is a mediator who is neither fully God nor fully a creature. Cyril, though, professes along with Nicaea that the Son of God is equal in all things to the Father, and not inferior in any way.³⁰ Scripture claims that this same

²⁵ *QU/SC* (PG 75:1273D).

²⁶ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:11.^{11ff.}; PG 77:12D).

²⁷ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:11.^{27ff.}; PG 77:13B).

²⁸ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:12.⁵⁻¹¹; PG 77:13C). Cf. Athanasius, *Contra Arianos* 3.29, 33.

²⁹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:12.^{32ff.}; PG 77:16BC).

³⁰ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:13.²⁸⁻³⁰; PG 77:17B).

Son, the Logos of God, became flesh (γεγενῆσθαι σάρκα); that is, was united to flesh possessing a rational human soul (ένωθῆναι σαρκί ψυξὴν ἐξούση τὴν λογικὴν).³¹ The one who is Incarnate is the Only Begotten from the Father, God from God, light from light, begotten not made (γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα), and *homousios* with the Father.³² Although others have been christs—i.e., anointed—only the Word become a human being is truly God (Θεός ἀληθώς). It then follows that many have been χριστοτόκοι, but there is only one Θεοτόκος.³³ The title is appropriate because while believers are children of God by grace, Christ is the Son of God by nature (φύσει) and in truth (ἀληθεία).³⁴

Cyril addresses the deity of Christ in a sermon preached on St. John's Day at Ephesus in 431. He says that Mary, the Θεοτόκος, gave birth to the Only Begotten Logos of God.³⁵ Though in the form of a slave (μορφὴ δούλου), he is free. He has become like us, but he remains the ruler over all creation. He was abased through the Incarnation, yet he is still enthroned with the Father. Though he worships alongside other human beings, he is worshipped because he is God. He became flesh (γέγονε σάρξ), that is he became a human being (γέγονε ἄνθρωπος); however, as an ἄνθρωπος he did not cease being God, but remained who he was prior to the Incarnation.³⁶ The Logos cannot be said to have changed into anything less than true God, as he is immutable in his very *ousia*. Mary is Θεοτόκος because Christ is God the Word who has become a human being without any damage to his essential nature as God.

Cyril makes the same argument in his letters to Nestorius. He quotes the Nicene Creed and rejects the notion that by becoming a human being the Word changed into σάρξ, or was made into an ἄνθρωπος.³⁷ Cyril is here rejecting the notion that the Logos changed *from* being God *to* being a human being. In contrast, he states that the one born to the Virgin existed from eternity (πρὸ αἰώνων), as he was begotten from the Father (γεννηθεὶς ἐκ Πατρός).³⁸ His divine nature, unlike his σάρξ, was not taken from the Virgin but was eternally generated from the Father. Cyril affirms the anathemas of the Nicene

³¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:13.³²⁻³³; PG 77:17C).

³² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:14.⁵⁻⁶; PG 77:20A).

³³ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:14.^{35-15.3}; PG 77:20D).

³⁴ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:15.⁵⁻⁶; PG 77:21A).

³⁵ *Homilia diversa* 2 (ACO 1.1.2:95.⁹⁻¹⁰; PG 77:988B).

³⁶ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.2:95.²⁷; PG 77:989A).

³⁷ *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:26.^{20ff}; PG 77:45B).

³⁸ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:27.⁵⁻⁶; PG 77:45C).

Statement pronounced against anyone who claims that there was a time when the Son of God was not, or that he did not exist before being begotten (πρὶν γεννηθῆναι). In addition, he agrees with its condemnation of those who profess the Son to be of a different ὑπόστασις or οὐσία of the Father, or who profess that he [the Son] is not immutable.³⁹ After appealing to Nicaea, Cyril makes a lengthy statement concerning the divinity of Christ:

We declare that the only-begotten Word of God, begotten from the very substance [οὐσία] of the Father, true God from true God, light from light, the one through whom all things both in heaven and earth were made, who came down for our salvation, emptying himself, he it is who was incarnate and made man [ἐνηθρώπησε]...without abandoning what he was but remaining, even when he has assumed flesh and blood, what he was, God, that is, in nature and truth. We declare that the flesh was not changed into the nature of Godhead and that neither was the inexpressible nature of God the Word converted into the nature of the flesh. He is, indeed, utterly unchangeable and immutable ever remaining, as the Bible says, the same; even when a baby seen in swaddling clothes at the bosom of the Virgin who bore him, he still filled the whole creation as God and was co-regent with his sire.⁴⁰

Cyril's confession is that the human being Jesus Christ is the Logos of God, and is therefore equal in all ways to the Father.⁴¹ For this reason, in his *Anathemas*, he condemns those who deny that Emmanuel is true God (Θεὸς κατὰ ἀλήθειαν) and thus do not confess Mary to be Θεοτόκος.⁴² Also anathematised are those who say that Christ is but a human being in whom God dwells (θεοφόρος ἄνθρωπος) rather than true God (Θεὸς κατὰ ἀλήθειαν) and Son of God by nature (φύσει).⁴³

In response to his accusers, Cyril states clearly that it is not because the divine nature of God the Word had its origins with the Virgin that she is called Θεοτόκος, nor is it that she bore one in whom the Logos dwelt, but because the one to whom she gave birth was God the Word.⁴⁴ He denies that he has ever said that the Virgin has borne the divine nature from her own flesh.⁴⁵ Mary is not Mother of

³⁹ *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:35.⁹⁻¹¹; PG 77:109B).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:35.¹⁴⁻²⁵; PG 77:109CD). Wickham's translation.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:38.¹⁵; PG 77:116B); *QUSC* (PG 75:1256D); *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:13.^{25, 34}; PG 77:17BC).

⁴² *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:40.²²⁻²⁴; PG 77:120B).

⁴³ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:41.⁵⁻⁷; PG 77:120D).

⁴⁴ *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:28.¹⁸⁻²¹; PG 77:48D); *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:40.³⁻⁸; PG 77:116D).

⁴⁵ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:31.²⁷⁻²⁹; PG 76:57A).

the Godhead, because the Word is eternal.⁴⁶ Rather, she is mother of God the Word become flesh. This means that although the Word did not take his existence from the Virgin, he nevertheless did undergo a human birth with Mary as his earthly mother.⁴⁷ In other words, Cyril is recognising that the Word of God is begotten from the Father from eternity, and the origin of his life is not the birth of Christ. It was absurd to suggest that God's life comes from a human birth, insinuating that the Godhead had its beginning in flesh and blood?⁴⁸ Cyril does not intend for one to infer from Θεοτόκος that this is the case. The Word does not have his beginning contemporaneous with the birth of his body, but is begotten of the *ousia* of the Father. He had his beginning before Abraham, as he is God.⁴⁹ Consequently, when he has become a human being—Christ—he does not begin his life as God at that point, only his life as God become an ἄνθρωπος. Hence, Christ is God and Mary is Θεοτόκος.

Cyril begins his great treatise *Quod unus sit Christus* with the charge that the logical conclusion of Nestorius' christology is the same as that of the Arians: the Only Begotten Word of God is not equal with the Father; that is, he is not *homoousios* with him.⁵⁰ Whereas Arianism had explicitly denied that the Son was fully God, the innovation of the Nestorians is subtle, as it attacks the deity of the Son by means of an attack on Θεοτόκος.⁵¹ Scripture proves both heresies to be unfounded, Cyril argues. The earlier heresy of the Arians is rejected just as the later one of Nestorius. The Nestorian rejection of Θεοτόκος, Cyril says, reveals the belief that Emmanuel is not truly God (Θεός ἀληθῶς). Because Emmanuel is the Word become Incarnate, he interprets them as denying that the Word is God. In contrast, he confesses the Word to be co-eternal with the Father and ineffably begotten of him. When the Logos became Incarnate, he did not change into flesh, but remained God as he was before becoming a human being.⁵² He suggests that the Nestorians interpret Cyril to believe that the nature of the Word was changed because of the term ἐγένετο. Their evidence for such an interpretation are the passages from Scripture in which Lot's wife is said to have ἐγένετο a pillar of salt, and Moses' rod

⁴⁶ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:15.^{7ff}; PG 77:21Aff).

⁴⁷ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:16.³⁵; PG 76:20C); *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:17.¹⁹⁻²⁴; PG 76:297B).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:31.¹⁴⁻¹⁸; PG 76:56D).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:63.²⁸⁻³¹; PG 76:137B).

⁵⁰ *QU/SC* (PG 75:1256Bff).

⁵¹ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1257BC).

⁵² *Ibid.* (PG 75:1260Bff).

ἐγένετο a serpent. In both instances a change of nature took place.⁵³ Cyril responds with two passages of his own, both from the Psalms. In the first, the Lord is said to have ἐγένετο a refuge to the psalmist, and in the second he has ἐγένετο a refuge for his people.⁵⁴ It is in this way that God the Word became a human being (γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος).⁵⁵ However, the Word was not turned into flesh (οὐκ εἰς σάρκα τραπεῖς), nor was there a merger (φυρμός) or mixture (κρᾶσις) of the Logos and humanity (ἀνθρωπότης). Rather, by means of a human birth, the one who is incorporeal (ἄσωματος) was seen on the earth, because he was God appearing like us (καθ' ἡμᾶς), in the form of a slave (μορφὴ δούλου). Consequently, the Virgin is Θεοτόκος.⁵⁶

Clearly, the foundation of Cyril's claim that Christ is truly God (Θεός ἀληθῶς) is his exposition of the Nicene Statement. Cyril records the Nicene Creed, claiming to follow the great Fathers at every point.⁵⁷ He reminds his readers that the Son of God is *homoousios* with the Father, equal to him in all glory and power.⁵⁸ He maintains that Nicaea is confessing the Incarnation of the very Word of God, true God from true God, light from light, begotten from the very substance (οὐσία) of the Father. It is this same Son of God who has become flesh and become a human being; that is, he became Christ Jesus. It is he who became a human being without ceasing to be God. Christ, then, is the Only Begotten Logos of God become a human being. The one who transcends all creation in nature (φύσις) and in glory (δόξα) voluntarily limited himself to living a human life. He continues to be God, and thus remains equal with the Father. What the Son was prior to the Incarnation—that is, true God—he remains.⁵⁹ The Word was not changed into flesh, for he is immutable, always remaining the same. As we saw in a statement from Cyril earlier, even when the Word was a baby in his mother's arms, he still filled the whole of his creation, and reigned alongside the Father as God. In other words, neither spatially nor in any other manner was the Word constrained within his humanity, as though he were trapped within a receptacle. This would be impossible, as God has no size or shape, cannot be measured, and is unable to be bound.⁶⁰ Cyril affirms that the Word of God, the one who became a human being,

⁵³ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1260C). Cf. Genesis 19:26; Exodus 4:3.

⁵⁴ Cf. Psalms 94:22; 90:1.

⁵⁵ *QUSC* (PG 75:1261B).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1261BC).

⁵⁷ *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:35.¹⁻¹³; PG 77:109BC).

⁵⁸ *Ep.* 55 (ACO 1.1.4:53.^{21ff}; PG 77:300D).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.4:54.^{17ff}; PG 77:301D).

⁶⁰ *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:35.²⁵⁻²⁶; PG 77:109D).

is impassible and beyond suffering,⁶¹ immortal,⁶² invisible,⁶³ untouchable,⁶⁴ and immutable.⁶⁵ He possesses these qualities in his own nature, as he himself is true God. Moreover, it is the incorporeal Logos of God who has taken for himself a human body.⁶⁶ The one who became a human being is *homoousios* with the Father.⁶⁷ Cyril recognises and confesses that it was God himself, and not someone inferior to God, who became a human being.⁶⁸ Because Christ is God the Word in the flesh, Cyril says that Christ is *homoousios* with the Father. In addition, he still fills all of creation,⁶⁹ and rules over all the world.⁷⁰ Even when Incarnate, as the Word he maintains his position of equality with the Father, possessing all that the Father has except the title Father.⁷¹ The Word remains impassible and immortal in his own nature (φύσις), even when Incarnate.⁷² He has not been diminished by taking on the form of a slave and becoming a human being. Cyril's conclusion is that Christ also possesses all the qualities of the Word, because Christ is the Word, but is the Word in the σάρξ. His picture of Christ as God is possible because of his conviction that Christ is none other than the eternal Son of God Incarnate.

Analogies

We have seen that Cyril's understanding of Christ as Θεός rests with his conception of Christ as the Word of God become a human being (ἄνθρωπος). In other words, for Cyril, because the Logos is true God, and Christ is the Logos, then Christ is true God. We will now exam-

⁶¹ *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:25.¹⁷⁻¹⁸; PG 76:312C); *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:27.¹⁶; PG 77:48A); *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:37.¹⁰; PG 77:113A); *QUSC* (PG 75:1345D).

⁶² *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:25.¹⁷⁻¹⁸; PG 76:312C).

⁶³ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:18.¹⁵; PG 77:28D); *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:19.¹⁰⁻¹⁵; PG 76:301A).

⁶⁴ *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:19.¹⁰⁻¹⁵; PG 76:301A).

⁶⁵ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:15.¹⁵⁻¹⁷; PG 76:16C); *QUSC* (PG 75:1261A).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:30.³⁸⁻⁴⁰, 63.³⁸; PG 56A, 137C); *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:27.¹⁶; PG 77:48A); *QUSC* (PG 75:1345D).

⁶⁷ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:13.²⁶⁻³¹, 34; PG 77:CD); *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:36.²⁶⁻²⁸, 38.^{9ff}; PG 77:112D, 116D); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:15.⁴², 63.³⁷; PG 76:17B, 137C); *QUSC* (PG 75:1256C).

⁶⁸ See *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:13.²⁵⁻³¹; PG 77:17C).

⁶⁹ *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:35.²⁴⁻²⁵; PG 77:109D); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:38.⁶⁻⁷; PG 76:73A); *Answers to Tiberius* (W 146.¹⁴⁻¹⁴⁸, 32).

⁷⁰ *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:35.²⁵, 36.²⁴; PG 77:109D, 112D).

⁷¹ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:82.⁸⁻⁹, 94.²³; PG 76:184C, 216C); *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:23.²⁰⁻²¹; PG 76:308D).

⁷² See above.

ine some analogies Cyril uses to argue that Christ is truly God (Θεός ἀληθῶς). The first of these is found in a letter from Cyril to Nestorius. The general context is Cyril's argument against the notion that in becoming a human being the Word was somehow changed into something less than complete God, the charge levelled against Cyril by the Easterns. The immediate context is his explanation of Christ's statement that the Spirit will glorify (δοξάσει) him.⁷³ If Christ is true God, as Cyril has proposed, the obvious reaction to this statement is that God is claiming to be glorified by the Spirit. How, then, can Christ be God? Cyril responds that this statement does not mean that Christ, the Son of God Incarnate, was deficient in glory, or that he was inferior to the Holy Spirit. Rather, Cyril says, he used his own Spirit to work wonders which demonstrate that he is God.⁷⁴ This is analogous to how physical strength or a skill is said to bring glory to the one possessing it. In other words, the skill of an individual is said to belong to that person, and it is his own skill which brings glory to him. Likewise, the Holy Spirit is Christ's Spirit and thereby glorifies him. In fact, Cyril argues, this statement does nothing to diminish the notion that Christ is God, but strengthens it: because the Spirit of God is the very own Spirit of Christ, it follows that Christ is God. This image is plain enough, and offers no real problems for the interpreter. It is easily seen that if the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, then the statement by Christ, "He will glorify me", does not imply either a lack of divine glory in Christ or his inferiority to the Spirit. In contrast, as the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of God, it follows, in Cyril's thinking, that Christ is God.

In his *Scholia*, Cyril provides a collection of three analogies (*exempla*) from Scripture which demonstrate that the Word become a human being remained God.⁷⁵ He employs them to illustrate that because the Word has become an ἄνθρωπος, then Christ is God by nature. The first image Cyril uses is the Mercy Seat (*propitiatorium*) of God.⁷⁶ He makes the correlation between Christ and this image because Christ was the *propitiatorium* for the sins of humankind, as we saw previously.⁷⁷ He says that Emmanuel was our living *propitiatorium*. In the analogy, the angels are always looking upon the Mercy Seat. Similarly, the angels never tire of looking upon God and worshipping

⁷³ *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:39.¹⁴⁻¹⁵; PG 77:116C); citing John 16:14.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:39.¹⁷⁻¹⁸; PG 77:116C).

⁷⁵ *Scholia* (PG 75:1387D-1391A). These passages are extant only in Latin.

⁷⁶ Cf. Exodus 25:17-20.

⁷⁷ Cf. Romans 3:25 and John 2:1-2.

him. Consequently, Cyril concludes that the living Mercy Seat is God, who is always worshipped by the angels. Because Christ is the living *propitiatorium*, then, for Cyril, Christ is God. If we read this image as a clarification of Cyril's statement that Christ is Θεός, then it makes sense. Cyril does not say that the Mercy Seat in Exodus is directly parallel to the person of Christ. Rather, in the same way that the cherubim on the Seat (*propitiatorium*) gaze towards it, so too do the angels gaze towards and worship Christ, the living *propitiatorium*. Because Isaiah records that the angels continually gaze upon and worship God, it follows that Christ is God. As with the previous analogy, little interpretative difficulty is present.

The next image is that of the rod of Moses, which was cast at the feet of the Pharaoh of Egypt.⁷⁸ In the Exodus account, Moses is told by God to place his staff on the ground. When he does, the rod turns into a snake. Moses picks up the snake, and it turns into a staff again. Cyril maintains that this analogy illustrates the fact that Christ is God. He says that the Son of God is the rod of the Father, as the rod is the symbol of the King, and the Son has been given power over all things. Just as the rod was placed on the earth, so too did the Son possess a human body. Similarly, the serpent is the symbol of wickedness, and the Word came in the form of wicked humanity. Just as the bronze serpent in the wilderness was the source of salvation for the Israelites, so too is Christ—the Word who has come in the form of wickedness—the source of salvation for humankind. Furthermore, the snake became a rod once again, which illustrates that the Son returned to heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father. Unlike the previous two images, this one contains potential problems for the reader. One could conclude that Cyril is announcing a change in the Word. The rod, when cast upon the ground, was no longer a rod, but was a serpent. This is far from what Cyril is arguing; his premise is that the Word did not change. What, then, is the christological statement which Cyril is illustrating with this analogy? His stated objective is to illustrate that the Word of God become a human being—Christ—remained God. The image cannot be removed from its respective christological description. How, therefore, does Cyril make this analogy, which obviously contains the account of one thing being changed into another, fit his christological premise? The clue is found in the comments he makes about particular 'stages' of existence. The rod was a normal staff in Moses' hand. When it was cast to the ground, however, it became a serpent. Interesting to note, and most

⁷⁸ *Scholia* (PG 75:1389B-1390B); citing Exodus 4:1-5.

important to the interpretation of this analogy, is that Cyril calls the serpent the rod of Moses.⁷⁹ Although the rod is a serpent, it has not ceased being a rod. More importantly, however, is the point Cyril wishes to illustrate: just as the rod of Moses took on the form of wickedness in order to accomplish a particular divine task, so too did the Son of God taken on the form of wickedness (humanity) in order to accomplish the task of redemption. In other words, the Logos of God did not cease being God because he became a human being. This demonstrates the supreme importance of reading these images as analogies, and not christological descriptions.

The final analogy we will look at is another from the Pentateuch. This is the image of Moses' leprous hand.⁸⁰ God instructed Moses to place his hand within his garment. Moses did so, and when he removed it his hand had become leprous. God again instructed him to place his hand within his garment. This time, when the hand was removed it was restored to health. For Cyril, this illustrates the divinity of Christ. The Son of God is called the right hand of the Father, which is correlative with the hand of Moses in the analogy. While the Word was "in the bosom" of the Father, he existed in the glory and splendour of God. When he "was brought out", or became a human being, he was in the likeness of sinful flesh. The leprosy of Moses' hand illustrates sinful humanity, as the Law deems lepers to be unclean. After the resurrection, the Word returned to the bosom of the Father, and will appear again in the glory of God, though he has not laid aside his humanity. Like the previous analogy, one could interpret this one to suggest a change in the Word. Again, however, this is the opposite of Cyril's stated intention. How, then, does this image fit his purpose? The aspect of the analogy which Cyril is drawing upon is that Moses' hand takes on different forms, but is always his hand. So it is with the Word. He does not cease being God, but takes on the likeness of humanity. He has not changed into a human being, but has chosen to reveal himself in and through a genuine human life. Each of these four analogies are intended to be read as pointers to the truth. They are illustrative of the christological statement that Christ is Θεός. When read with this statement in mind, the interpreter is able to avoid many potential pitfalls. When removed from their christological contexts, however, the analogies are confusing and meaningless.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1390B).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1390C-1391A); citing Exodus 4:6.

Concluding Remarks

The preceding overview of Cyril's understanding of Christ as Θεός, enables us now to make a few important observations. As we have seen, Christ is God because he is the Son of God become flesh. The bases for Cyril's christology are the Nicene Creed and John 1:14. The former declares that the Son of God, true God from true God has become Incarnate and has become a human being. The Saviour is by nature Lord and God (κατὰ φύσιν Κύριος καὶ Θεός), who has economically (οἰκονομικῶς) come to be with us (μεθ' ἡμῶν) and to live a life in our condition (ἐν τοῖς ἡμῶς).⁸¹ Mary gave birth to the Word of God the Father become Incarnate (σαρκωθέντα) and become a human being (ἐνανθρωπήσαντα), and is therefore Θεοτόκος.⁸² The one who has become flesh (γέγονε σάρξ) is by nature (φύσει) and in truth (ἀληθείᾳ) the Son of God.⁸³ In addition, it was the Logos who became flesh and participated (κεκοινώνηκε) in flesh and blood with us.⁸⁴ The one who is *homoousios* with the Father, is invisible and impassible, fills all things and has all power, is the one who became a human being. God the Word is Christ, and therefore Christ is God the Word become an ἄνθρωπος and σάρξ.⁸⁵

An interesting debate ensues over Nestorius' citation of a passage from Hebrews in which the merciful High Priest suffered in the stead of those who are tempted.⁸⁶ He says that it is the temple (ναός) who suffered, and not the life-giving God. Cyril attacks Nestorius as conceiving of Christ as someone other than God the Word. He asks what is the source of the erroneous teaching that the Word of God the Father is the God of Christ.⁸⁷ The Word cannot be the God of Christ, because the Word *is* Christ. Moreover, the Logos did not

⁸¹ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:14.³⁰⁻³¹; PG 77:20C).

⁸² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:15.³⁻⁴; PG 77:21A).

⁸³ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:15.⁵⁻⁶; PG 77:21A).

⁸⁴ *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:41.⁶⁻⁷; PG 77:120D).

⁸⁵ *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:41.¹⁶; PG 77:121A); *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:17.^{2ff}, 18.³; PG 76:296D, 297C); *Thesaurus* (PG 75:264C, 329A, 369BC, 396B, 397D); *QUSC* (PG 1265B, 1273A, 1275A, 1304D); *Scholia* (PG 75:1274C, 1385A, 1396B); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:22.², 28.⁶, 62.³⁹; PG 76:33A, 48B, 136B); *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:15.⁴, 19.³, 30; PG 77:21A, 29C, 32B); *Homilia diversa* 2 (ACO 1.1.2:95.¹⁰; PG 77:988C); *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:38.¹⁷; PG 77:116B); *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:15.⁶; PG 77:21A); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:17.⁴, 21.⁴¹; PG 76:20D, 33A); *Answers to Tiberius* (W 158.⁹⁻¹¹); *inter alia*.

⁸⁶ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:60.²⁷⁻³⁰; PG 76:129C); (=Loofs 234.¹⁰⁻¹⁶); citing Hebrews 2:17-18.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:60.³⁶⁻³⁷; PG 76:129D).

cease being God because he became a human being like us.⁸⁸ Cyril says that the orthodox do not call the Word God or master (δεσπότη) of Christ, but recognise that the Word united to σάρξ is God of the universe and ruler of the entire world.⁸⁹ It is absurd to imply that he is master of himself. How could he be his own God? Cyril proceeds to anathematise whoever [Nestorius] claims that the Word is Christ's God or master, rather than confessing that Christ is God, based upon the Scriptural teaching that the Word has become σάρξ.⁹⁰ In his explanation of this anathema, Cyril says that Jesus Christ is the true Son of God who has authority over all things and is master of all because he is God, even after the Incarnation.⁹¹ Therefore, Jesus Christ is none other than the Son of God by nature (φύσει) and truly (ἀληθῶς).⁹² Cyril dedicates a paragraph of his *Scholia de Incarnatione* to proclaiming that Jesus Christ is the Word of God become an ἄνθρωπος.⁹³ He alludes to Nicaea, stating that the very Word of God, true God of true God, himself became a human being, died, and was raised from the dead. The one to whom the titles Only-begotten, Word, God, Life, Most High, *et alia* are attributed is the same individual who is ἄνθρωπος, Christ Jesus, and Mediator, although the latter apply only since the Incarnation.

We have been able to see that central to the christology of Cyril is the notion that he who was true God (Θεὸς ἀληθινός) before the Incarnation, remains so even in his human existence. This is a crucial christological question. The very immutability and impassibility of God is at stake, as we will see more clearly in Chapter Eight. Cyril states that the Logos remains God even in the σάρξ, and he is the one Son of God the Father.⁹⁴ He refers to the *Carmen Christi* and says that the Word is in the form (μορφή) of God the Father and is equal with him. However, he has humbled himself, and in a voluntary *kenosis* he has subjected himself to our condition, though he remains God.⁹⁵ Even in becoming a human being the Word remained God and possessed all that the Father possessed except the title Father.⁹⁶ Even

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:60.³⁹⁻⁴⁰; PG 76:129D).

⁸⁹ *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:30.^{26ff}; PG 77:112CD).

⁹⁰ *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:41.⁸⁻¹⁰; PG 77:121A).

⁹¹ *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:21.²¹⁻²⁸; PG 76:305A).

⁹² *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:28.⁵⁻⁶; PG 76:48B).

⁹³ *Scholia* (PG 75:1384Dff).

⁹⁴ *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:17.¹⁶; PG 76:297A); *Homilia diversa* 2 (ACO 1.1.2:95.²⁸; PG 77:989A).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.5:19.²²⁻²⁵; PG 76:301B).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.5:23.²⁰⁻²⁷; PG 76:308Dff).

in living a human life, the Logos did not abandon who he was—i.e., God by nature—but remained God.⁹⁷ Even in the σάρξ he is true God.⁹⁸ While Incarnate the Word remained God by nature (φύσει) and in truth (ἀληθείᾳ).⁹⁹ Cyril says that he continues to be what he was, and continues in the nature and glory of his divinity (θεότητος).¹⁰⁰

In his explanation of the first anathema, Cyril cites the Nicene statement that it was the Word of God, who was true God, who became flesh (σαρκωθῆναι) and became a human being (ἐνανθρωπήσαι).¹⁰¹ The fact that he became a human being like us (ἄνθρωπος καθ' ἡμᾶς), does not mean that he ceased being God, or that he was changed or transformed into something that he was not already, for God the Word is immutable.¹⁰² There was no merger (φυρμός), confusion (ἀνάχυσις), or mixture (σύγκρασις) of his *ousia* with the σάρξ.¹⁰³ Elsewhere in the same work Cyril says that the Word's manifestation in the flesh does not mean that his own nature (φύσις) was changed or converted into flesh.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, even in the flesh, he keeps the beauty of his own divine nature undiminished (ἀπαρραπίητον).¹⁰⁵ He says that the divine nature (ἡ Θεία φύσις) does not undergo a merger (φυρμός) or confusion (ἀνάχυσις), and neither does it change into what it was not previously—i.e. the humanity (ἀνθρωπότης).¹⁰⁶ The essential being (οὐσία) or nature (φύσις) of the Word did not change when he became Incarnate. This is the centre-piece of Cyril's christology.

The fact that the Word was not changed into something which he was not already in order to become a human being means that he is the same before and after the Incarnation. Cyril makes this explicit on a number of occasions. Against Nestorius, he says that the same

⁹⁷ *Scholia* (PG 75:1374B, 1375AC); *QUSC* (PG 75:1309C); *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:28.¹⁶⁻¹⁷; PG 77:48D);

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1391Bff). Extant only in Latin.

⁹⁹ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:15.⁵⁻⁶, 21.²¹⁻²³, 23.¹⁸⁻²²; PG 77:21A, 36A, 40B); *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:35.¹⁹⁻²¹, 38.¹⁴⁻¹⁶; PG 77:169D, 116B); *Ep.* 46 (ACO 1.1.6:158.¹⁸; PG 77:240B).

¹⁰⁰ *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:17.¹¹; PG 76:297A).

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.5:17.¹⁻⁶; PG 76:296D). The anathema condemns those who do not confess Emmanuel to be true God (θεός κατὰ ἀλήθειαν), and thus Mary to be Θεοτόκος.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.5:17.¹¹⁻¹³; PG 76:297A). Cf. James 1:17. See also *ibid.* (ACO 1.1.5:20.²¹⁻²²; PG 76:304B).

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.5:17.¹³⁻¹⁴; PG 76:297A).

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.5:18.³⁻⁴; PG 76:297D).

¹⁰⁵ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:64.²²⁻²³; PG 76:140B).

¹⁰⁶ *Scholia* (PG 75:1397C).

individual who was Son and God and Word of the Father before the Incarnation, is also Son and God and Word of the Father after he has become a human being.¹⁰⁷ He writes to Succensus that Scripture and the Fathers have taught one Son, Christ, and Lord, that is the Logos of God the Father.¹⁰⁸ The one Son of God is begotten ineffably from the Father from eternity, and has himself been born humanly from the Virgin. Therefore, there is one Son of God both before and after the Incarnation. The eternal Son was born and became a human being, but he is still the same Son, there has been no change or transformation of him into flesh, but he remains the same.¹⁰⁹

Cyril concludes that Christ is God because Christ is the immutable, impassible, and incorporeal Word of God the Father.¹¹⁰ He claims that the Fathers at Nicaea constructed their confession in such a way as to highlight that Jesus Christ was the Son of God by nature (φύσει) and truly (ἀληθῶς).¹¹¹ Elsewhere he says that the seed of David—that is, Jesus Christ—is eternal because he is none other than the eternally-generated Logos of God.¹¹² At the very beginning of the controversy with Nestorius, Cyril explains that the prophet Isaiah predicts the coming of Christ, announcing that he is divine.¹¹³ He claims that the prophet confirms Emmanuel to be Lord and God, and not some human being who is bearing God (Θεοφόρος). Moreover, John the Baptist proclaimed Jesus Christ to be God in the σάρξ.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, Cyril says that Emmanuel, the one born of the Virgin, is God's own Son (ὁ ἴδιος Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ).¹¹⁵ He sees the direct correlation between the deity of Christ and the deity of the Logos because he maintains that Christ is the Word begotten ineffably from God the Father.¹¹⁶

From this discussion, we can conclude that Cyril's christology is indeed a Logos-centred christology. This is not to imply that he conceived of a docetic Christ in which God merely masqueraded as a human being. Rather, it means that he interprets the Incarnation

¹⁰⁷ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:47.²¹⁻²²; PG 76:97A).

¹⁰⁸ *Ep.* 45 (ACO 1.1.6:152.¹²⁻²⁴; PG 77:229Df).

¹⁰⁹ See also *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:17.^{30-18.19}; PG 76:297Cff).

¹¹⁰ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:18.²⁰; PG 76:24D).

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:28.⁵⁻⁶; PG 76:48B).

¹¹² *QUSC* (PG 75:1309B-D).

¹¹³ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:19.^{3ff}; PG 77:29CD).

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:19.^{23ff}; PG 77:32AB).

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:20.⁹; PG 77:32C).

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:21.²⁶⁻²⁷; PG 77:36B); *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:19.⁸⁻⁹; PG 76:300D); *QUSC* (PG 75:1256D, 1305A, 1308AB).

solely as a voluntary, *kenotic* act of God the Word, who willingly underwent a human birth, in order to live a human life. As we have seen, though, he did not do this merely for the experience, but did so on behalf of humankind, as a means of redemption and reconciliation. For Cyril, any orthodox picture of Jesus Christ begins with the confession that he is God the Word become a human being for the salvation of humankind.

Excursus: The Divine Power of Christ

Before proceeding to discuss Cyril's understanding of the humanity of Christ, we need to address, albeit briefly, the issue of Christ's divine abilities. In particular, it is important that we see the source of his divine powers, at least in Cyril's thinking. For the Alexandrian, the fact that Christ is God means that he possesses the power of God. This means that the divine power is inherent to him, rather than merely bestowed upon him as it was on the prophets and apostles. In other words, Christ is not simply an instrument or channel for God's power; rather, the power of God is his *own* power. We can see this when Cyril quotes Isaiah's prophecy about the coming Christ: "Then shall he open the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf shall hear. Then the lame shall leap like a deer and the tongue of the dumb shall be clear".¹¹⁷ Isaiah also proclaimed, "The Lord is coming with strength and his right arm has dominion".¹¹⁸ Truly, Cyril maintains, Jesus Christ did have strength and power which is fitting for God. In addition, he possessed the authority of God. Moreover, Christ possesses this power, not because he is one possessing God (Θεοφόρος ἄνθρωπος), but because he is God. Cyril even anathematizes whoever says that the power of Christ to cast out demons or accomplish miracles was a power which was alien to him.¹¹⁹ This anathema is necessary for him to pronounce because those who would teach this are denying therein that the Spirit of God was Christ's own Spirit. Cyril, though, maintains that Christ performs divine works because he is God, and therefore, the Spirit of God is his own Spirit. Consequently, the power to perform miracles is his own power.¹²⁰ He is not

¹¹⁷ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:19.⁷⁻⁹; PG 77:29C); citing Isaiah 35:4-6. McGuckin's translation

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:19.¹⁷⁻¹⁸; PG 77:29D); citing Isaiah 40:9-10. McGuckin's translation.

¹¹⁹ *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:41.¹⁷⁻²⁰; PG 77:121B).

¹²⁰ *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:23.²⁰⁻²⁷; PG 76:308Df). Cf. *QUSC* (PG 75:1313A-C).

an instrument for accomplishing them, instead, he does these works himself, in his own power. He reiterates this claim by stating, against Nestorius, that the Spirit of God is within Christ and from him, and is not foreign to him.¹²¹ Christ's power was not bestowed upon him by the grace of God, as it was bestowed upon the apostles or one of us, but it was his own inherent power. The ability to accomplish divine works was not from a power which has been given to him, but is a power he has as true God (Θεὸς ἀληθινός).¹²²

¹²¹ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:77.³⁷⁻³⁸; PG 76:173A).

¹²² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:77.^{43ff}; PG 76:173AB). Cf. *Scholia* (PG 75:1404BC); *QUSC* (PG 75:1344B).

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE PRESENCE OF A HUMAN SOUL: USING IMAGERY TO ILLUSTRATE THAT CHRIST IS ἄνθρωπος τέλειος

In the previous chapter we were able to see that Cyril affirmed Christ to be true God, because he was the Word of God. As we will discover shortly, this affirmation was the central theme to Cyril's understanding of the person and work of Christ. We will now turn to another aspect of the Alexandrian's christology: Christ as ἄνθρωπος. It is this component of Cyril's christology which has proved to be the source of the most disagreement among scholars. The fundamental problem is his understanding of σάρξ, and whether or not he believed that Christ possessed a rational human soul. The debate has centred round the so-called Logos-sarx christology of Alexandria, which found its nadir in the great heretic Apollinarius.¹ The subsequent christological controversy of the fifth century has often been interpreted in its relation to the Apollinarian heresy, and whether or not the christology was able adequately to reject Apollinarianism. This is especially true of the Alexandrian theologians, and Cyril in particular. As we will see, there are basically three categories into which interpretations can be divided. The first, and most popular in the middle part of this century, is that σάρξ meant for Cyril little or nothing more than unanimated corporeality.² In other words, the Word inhabited a fleshly shell. This christology amounts to something rather akin to Apollinarianism. Most scholars who hold this interpretation recognise a shift in Cyril's understanding of Christ during and after the Nestorian Controversy. The second interpretation is that Cyril understood σάρξ to mean ἄνθρωπος, even early in his writing career.³ In addition, scholars of this persuasion maintain that he affirmed clearly the presence of a rational human soul in Christ. The final interpretation is that although Cyril recognised the presence of a human soul in

¹ In recent studies, this artificial method of categorising christologies has been questioned. Cf. McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*; Norris, 'Christological Models in Cyril of Alexandria'.

² See Liébaert, *La Doctrine christologique*, and Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition* (1975).

³ See Dratsellas, 'Questions on christology', and T. F. Torrance, 'The Mind of Christ'. In his published PhD, Welch argues for this as well.

Christ, he attributed little or no significance to it.⁴ In other words, the soul of Christ is a physical factor, but not a theological one.⁵ Some conclude that Cyril's early christology fits into the first category, but later develops into the third category. The ultimate issue at stake is how Cyril understood the human life of Christ, and the extent to which he was or was not a *ἄνθρωπος τέλειος*. In this chapter, we intend first to review the conclusions of some prominent proponents of each position, and second to investigate the material afresh to discover what Cyril says about the presence of a human soul in Christ. The source of Cyril's understanding of Christ's human nature are the direct statements he makes about Christ's soul, and the images he uses to illustrate his conception of the humanity of Emmanuel. Consequently, this chapter will be primarily a restatement of Cyril's description of the humanity of Christ, and how he uses various descriptive terms in his christology.

Our review of scholarly discussions concerning Christ's soul in Cyril's christology must begin with Harnack, and his *History of Dogma*. A review of Harnack's discussion of Cyril with regard to the question of the human soul in Christ must revolve around his interpretation of Cyril's *Second Letter to Succensus*. He understands Cyril to say that "the substance (οὐσία) of the human nature in Christ does not subsist on its own account, but that it is nevertheless not imperfect since it has its subsisting element in the God-Logos", which he concludes, "means nothing at all or it is Apollinarianism".⁶ He also says that "the best of what he [Cyril] had he got from Apollinaris [sic]".⁷ At another point, however, he recognises that in contrast to Apollinarius, Cyril does affirm a rational human soul in Christ.⁸ The most remarkable suggestion by Harnack is that Cyril conceived of the humanity of Christ as having existed prior to the Incarnation, but being transferred "entirely to the substance of the God-Logos".⁹ This position can be seen later in Wolfson,¹⁰ who claims that the fourth and fifth century Fathers are looking for a means by which the Logos is both a person and a nature, but the humanity is only a nature, not a person. Using the term "perfect humanity" means for Harnack nothing more than a paradox, or logical contradiction, which both does away with

⁴ See Chadwick, 'Eucharist and Christology'.

⁵ Grillmeier (1975), 417.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 176 n. 3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 178 n. 2.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Philosophy of the Church Fathers*.

Apollinarianism *per se*, and remains true to the faith passed on from the Fathers. This question of the human soul of Christ is of little importance to Harnack, as he perceives it to have been for Cyril nothing more than a statement affirming his orthodoxy.

We will next turn to Liébaert, whose *La doctrine christologique de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie avant la querelle nestorienne* claims that Cyril's christology represents the Logos-sarx framework. Liébaert reasons that Cyril accepts the prevailing anthropology of the day; that is, the Platonic notion of a human being as a spirit trapped within a fleshly prison.¹¹ In Liébaert's estimation, the basis of Cyril's christology is an anthropology which accepted the trichotomist notion of a human being as the union of spirit, soul, and body.¹² Consequently, there was no need to attribute any significance to the human soul of Christ, as the important notion was the Word's indwelling of the human flesh (*chair*).¹³

As important as Liébaert's work was, it is Grillmeier's immense work *Christ in Christian Tradition* that has become a standard of patristic scholarship. Although Grillmeier follows Liébaert with little wavering, he has been the reference of most scholars since his work was produced. Grillmeier begins his explanation of Cyril's answer to the question of Christ's human soul with the statement that prior to the controversy with Nestorius, Cyril was completely unaware of the Apollinarian Controversy that had existed since the time of Athanasius, right up to the present.¹⁴ This bold claim makes Cyril a representative of an archaic Logos-sarx christology, in which Christ is merely Logos and sarx. He maintains that prior to 428 and the inception of the debates with the Easterns, the question of a rational human soul in Christ is not present in Cyril's thinking. Grillmeier does confess that one must assume Cyril to have recognised its presence as a result of the previous controversies.¹⁵ He concludes that up until the emergence of Nestorius, Cyril never considered a human soul in Christ to be a "theological factor", although he may have affirmed its reality.¹⁶ In fact, Grillmeier claims that "Apollinarianism and the church's struggle against it seem to be virtually unknown to the au-

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, 158.

¹² *Ibid.*, 147.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 158.

¹⁴ *Christ in Christian Tradition* (1975), 414.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 415. This, of course, is an interesting statement, especially in relation to the one made previously that the 'younger' Cyril 'seems to know nothing of the whole christological controversy between the time of Athanasius and his own', 414.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

thor of the *Thesaurus* and the *Dialogues*".¹⁷ He bases this conclusion on Cyril's failure to attack "the basic christological position on which they [the Arians] rely, that the Logos is the soul of Christ".¹⁸ In addition, none of the statements by Cyril that Christ is ἄνθρωπος "allow us to conclude quite simply that in Cyril's picture of Christ the soul has already become a 'theological factor'".¹⁹ This is Grillmeier's interpretation of the pre-Nestorian Controversy Cyril; but what of Cyril during and after the controversy? He now turns to examining Cyril's christology in the controversy over Θεοτόκος, in which Cyril inadvertently adopted for himself the central formula of Apollinarianism.²⁰ Grillmeier has interpreted Apollinarius' christology to revolve around the notion of the Logos as the only "all-animating source of life and movement" with regards to Christ. In other words, Apollinarius, in Grillmeier's interpretation of him, had understood a human being to be a synthesis of body and soul.²¹ In this way, "true manhood is not a human soul, in other words a spiritual being which has been created beforehand for a body, but some spirit which unites itself with the flesh to form a complete unity".²² In the person of Christ, the Logos is the spirit (*pneuma*) which is united to the body with a non-rational soul. The question of whether this is a dichotomist or trichotomist anthropology is dismissed by Grillmeier as being of only secondary importance.²³ When he compares Cyril to this picture of an incomplete humanity, Grillmeier's only conclusion is that Cyril eventually (not until his *Second Letter to Succensus*) chooses to recognise the human soul of Christ as a theological factor. This occurs only when Cyril attributes the sufferings of Christ to the soul as well as the body.²⁴ Therefore, the *natural* life of Christ is derived from the rational human soul rather than from the Logos *qua* Logos. What Grillmeier seems to be arguing is that early in his ministry Cyril did not recognise the need for affirming a human soul in Christ, and only did so later under the pressure of the controversy with the Easterns. Even when he affirmed the presence of the soul, he failed to see its theological significance, which Grillmeier interprets as being the recipient of the sufferings of

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 416.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 473. This formula in question is that of the μία φύσις.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 330.

²² *Ibid.*, 331.

²³ *Ibid.*, 331-332.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 475-476.

Christ. Once Cyril does, in Grillmeier's estimation, attribute the sufferings of Christ to his rational human soul as well as his body, he has once and for all defeated the Logos-sarx christology which had plagued the Alexandrian church. Cyril was only able to do this once he conceived of the soul of Christ, as opposed to the Logos, as giving him his *natural life*. In other words, whereas Apollinarius conceived of a human life as being derived from the rational soul being in a synthetic unity with a body and non-rational human soul, and therefore in Christ the Logos replaced the life-giving rational soul, Cyril was able to attribute the source of the human life of Christ to the rational human soul, rather than to the Logos. It was in this way, Grillmeier argues, that Cyril's picture of Christ superseded that of Apollinarius.

In his article, "Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian Controversy", Chadwick argues, in contrast to Grillmeier, that Cyril's fundamental christological position had been solidified years prior to Nestorius' rise to the See of Constantinople.²⁵ In addition, he cites passages from Cyril's *Commentary on Isaiah* in which Cyril insists that the σάρξ of Christ did indeed possess a νοέον ψυχή.²⁶ In Chadwick's interpretation, this type of statement was made by Cyril "to dispel any idea that he shared Apollinarian views of the absence of a human mind in Christ".²⁷ However, Chadwick proceeds to claim that there is no real place for the human soul of Christ in Cyril's "conception of salvation as mediated to the believer by the eucharistic body of Christ".²⁸

The stated intention of T. F. Torrance's massive article, "The Mind of Christ in Worship: The Problem of Apollinarianism in the Liturgy" is "to examine briefly the teaching of Apollinarius [sic] about a Jesus Christ without a human soul or rational mind, and draw out its implications for worship, and then turn to the teaching of St Cyril of Alexandria, in this respect the most anti-Apollinarian of the great Fathers, to learn what he had to say about worship if we take seriously the rational soul or mind of Jesus".²⁹ In his section on the teaching of Apollinarius Torrance reminds the reader of Apollinarius' christological premise: the inward man in Christ was replaced by a heavenly mind, who is the Logos.³⁰ He interprets Apollinarius as teaching a "*kenotic theory in reverse*"; that is, it was "a substitution of the

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 150.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 151.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 155.

²⁹ *Op. cit.*, 142.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 143.

controlling centre in man by the Logos who then used the outward form of man as a bodily envelope for his incarnate presence among men. In actual fact, therefore, the Incarnation involved not so much an emptying of God as an emptying of man in respect of his human mind to make room for the Logos, resulting in such a union with human existence in the flesh that there was one incarnate nature".³¹ He concludes this section with a critique of the implications of this type of christology on worship, utilising the *Contra Apollinarem* as his source of reference. Torrance first concludes that Apollinarianism "deprives Jesus of fully human experience, and therefore of sharing with us our experience to the full, our birth, growth, death, our pain, anguish, distress, agitation, and what is more our incapacity and temptation, and our human existence in a condition of servitude and humiliation".³² Second, he states that by removing, as it were, the human soul from Christ, thereby making him not *homoousios* with us, Apollinarius disallows the saving death of Christ, as it is merely his death, and not made ours by his vicarious action made on our behalf.³³ Thirdly, by not assuming what had been tainted by sin, the Word was unable to deal with the root cause of man's need of a Saviour.³⁴ Finally, the work of salvation was one both of the outward and the inward elements of Christ, "no less a work of his soul than a work of his body".³⁵

Torrance next summarises briefly the teaching of Athanasius and the Cappadocians, particularly as it related to Apollinarianism,³⁶ before proceeding to examine the teaching of Cyril in contrast to that of the arch-heretic. Torrance highlights the difference between them in relation to the concept of *kenosis*.³⁷ Whereas Apollinarius had understood the emptying to be the assumption of an incomplete human being, Cyril understood it to be equated with humiliation or abasement, a "becoming nothing".³⁸ Torrance then makes three observations about Cyril's christology as opposed to Apollinarianism. First, "God become man means that God as man acts and lives *within* the limits (ὅροι), principles (λόγοι), measures (μέτρα) and laws (νόμοι) of what is inalienably and properly human".³⁹ That is, God lived a

³¹ *Ibid.*, 144.

³² *Ibid.*, 147-148.

³³ *Ibid.*, 148.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 148-149.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 149.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 151-156.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 161.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 163.

completely human life, experiencing what is typical of human beings. He did this by condescension, or *kenosis*, whereby he willingly experienced those things which are properly human.⁴⁰ Therefore, not only things attributable to the body, but also to the soul are experienced by God become ἄνθρωπος.⁴¹ He therefore shares “to the full our actual human life and experience”.⁴² Second, God saves only what he has taken up. This means that it was necessary that the Word assume a complete human nature in order to save the whole human being.⁴³ To remove a human soul or mind from Christ disallows its salvation. By living a sinless life as a complete human being, Christ is then able to offer “the whole life of filial obedience” to the Father on our behalf.⁴⁴ Finally, “in taking up our human condition into himself the Son of God has condescended to be the Mediator between God and man...who has opened up access to God the Father by his own blood and who lives and acts from within the depths of our mental and physical human nature as the ministering priest for all mankind”.⁴⁵

Torrance's analysis is that Cyril perceived a need for Christ to possess a rational human soul primarily for soteriological reasons. In other words, for redemption to be accomplished the Saviour had to be a complete human being, while at the same time being completely God. The only way for this to happen was for God the Word to condescend (this is the *kenosis*) to the abasement of human living. Consequently, Torrance argues that the human soul of Christ occupies an important place in Cyril's christological system. In fact, without the soul, there is no salvation. In addition, the implications for each of the observations we discussed earlier on the worship of the Church are highlighted by Torrance. He interprets the evidence to demonstrate that for Cyril not only salvation, but also worship demands the presence of a rational human soul in Christ. In Torrance's view, Cyril's christology breaks down if Christ is not a complete human being of rational soul and body.

In his article, “Questions on christology of Cyril of Alexandria”, the Greek Orthodox theologian Constantine Dratsellas states, “if Christ's human Nature is not complete, the whole work of man's Salvation is destroyed”.⁴⁶ He says that in his earliest works Cyril

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 164.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 167.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 170f.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 204.

speaks of Christ as Logos and sarx, and that he does so primarily because “he had to fight against Arianism, his theological language was not very clear yet, and his main interest was Christ’s divinity”.⁴⁷ Dratsellas then sets out to demonstrate that even in his early works Cyril perceived of the presence of a rational human soul in Christ. He cites numerous examples from especially Cyril’s *Thesaurus* to support his view that “Cyril speaks of Christ’s whole Humanity, which cannot but include a rational soul”.⁴⁸ He finds the same thing, he claims, in Cyril’s *Commentary on John*. He therefore concludes that Cyril did, even from the beginning of his writing career, use σάρξ to mean ἄνθρωπος, and thus he affirmed the presence of a human soul in Christ. He disagrees with Grillmeier’s statement that “Christ, in the theological interpretation given by the young Cyril, is no more than Logos and Sarx”,⁴⁹ if by σάρξ he means unanimated corporeality. Cyril rejected the Apollinarian teaching that the humanity was body and non-rational soul, but that the Logos replaced the rational soul of Christ. Instead, Cyril taught that the Word “received Flesh not without a rational Soul, therefore a physically perfect human nature was born truly of a woman and became Man He who is co-eternal with God the Father, and Who is perfect in Humanity as He is perfect in Deity”.⁵⁰

In her article, “A Reconsideration of Alexandrian Christology”, Frances Young seeks to offer suggestions that “may lead to a more sympathetic view of Alexandrian thinking”.⁵¹ She begins with a brief statement of the Alexandrian doctrine of redemption, and then addresses the question of their continued use of the body-soul analogy, even after Cyril of Alexandria. She then states that Cyril and the Monophysites repeatedly asserted that the σάρξ assumed by the Logos “was a man with a soul and a mind, thus safeguarding themselves from the condemnation of heresy”.⁵² Were they actually, though, affirming Apollinarianism while explicitly denying it? It is true, she claims, that the Alexandrians, including Cyril, did not consider the human soul of Christ to have any active role to play in redemption, demonstrating a tendency towards Apollinarianism.⁵³ Athanasius had attributed the weaknesses of Christ to the flesh, and

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 205.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁴⁹ Grillmeier (1975), 333.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 231.

⁵¹ *Op. cit.*, 103.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 106.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

did not make use of any idea of a fallible human soul to account for the psychological conflicts in Christ. She concludes that Athanasius has “allegorised away” the humanity of Christ.⁵⁴ Cyril’s position is no different from this, she claims. The accusations that he has not “integrated the soul into his christology” have adequate grounding, she maintains.⁵⁵ However, Young says that Cyril “recognised the soteriological grounds for asserting the existence of Christ’s human soul”.⁵⁶ Cyril is following Athanasius, in Young’s view, and does not assert the soul to have an *active* part to play in salvation, though his frequent assertion of its presence is not solely an attempt to avoid Apollinarianism. Instead, the presence of the rational human soul, though not an active participant in redemption, is required for salvation to be made possible.⁵⁷ A complete humanity, including a soul, was necessary for Christ to save the whole human being.

This leaves open the question of the “psychological weaknesses” of Christ. Though for Young the psychological weaknesses of Christ were almost explained away by the Alexandrians, who favoured a more docetic approach to them, “this does not mean that the humanity of Christ in the Alexandrian tradition is so truncated as to be unrecognisable or irrelevant to the human situation, especially in the context of their presuppositions about human psychology”.⁵⁸ One possible reason for Cyril’s “failure” to refer to Christ’s human soul when discussing Christ’s psychological weaknesses is his understanding of the human soul as *ἀπαθής*. In this way, then, the weaknesses are attributed to the *σάρξ* rather than the soul. In any case, Young’s conclusion is that the human soul of Christ occupies a passive position in Cyril’s christology, and has no active role to play in redemption.

McGuckin, in the most recent major work on the christology of Cyril, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, also discusses the idea of the human soul of Christ within the context of a contrast between Apollinarius and Cyril. McGuckin states that Apollinarius saw the fundamental christological problem as being “how to avoid a doctrine of two subjects in the incarnation [sic], on the one hand, and on the other hand a single subject doctrine which would hopelessly relativise the Logos in a changeable human life, in a way that could

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 110-111.

only demonstrate his essential non-deity".⁵⁹ McGuckin interprets him as answering the question with his idea of the Logos, who is the Image of God, replacing the human soul or Nous, which is the image of the Image.⁶⁰ Because the Word was the archetype of all human souls, he did not need to be united to the image of the Image, but instead replaced it. For Apollinarius, in platonic fashion, the soul, or Nous, of human being is not simply one part of the individual, but is the individual.⁶¹ Therefore, the body of a human being is an accident or property of the soul. Consequently, "if the Logos was enfleshed, then he was genuinely living a human and corporeal life, and yet, equally, was not subject to its limitations".⁶² In McGuckin's interpretation of him, Apollinarius has settled the christological debate in his mind by replacing the human soul of Christ with the Word, who is the archetype of all souls.

McGuckin's discussion of Cyril with regard to the question of the human soul in Christ, centres around a brief critique of the Logos-sarx and Logos-anthropos categories used to describe Patristic christologies. He states that the Word-flesh and Word-man distinctions proposed by Richard and Grillmeier have been "artificially imposed on the subject in hand, quite anachronistically, and which distorts the context of the ancient debate more than it informs it".⁶³ Cyril, he says, has often been accused of not giving the soul of a Christ a greater role in his christology. He concludes that "Grillmeier's analysis of the development of christology almost makes this soul-christology a mark of authentic progress, and so describes Cyril as an antiquated thinker who delayed the development of the church's theology".⁶⁴ McGuckin argues that Cyril did envisage the presence of a human Nous in Christ, which was the focus of his human spiritual and intellectual functions, and that this was the centre of his attack on Apollinarian christology. He reasons that Cyril did not want to limit what he means by "person" to the emotional, mental, or intellectual functions of person. Consequently, McGuckin interprets him to follow the anthropology of Athanasius' *De Incarnatione*, in which "man's ontological stability utterly depends on the human person's spiritual relation to the creative Word".⁶⁵ Cyril's refusal to

⁵⁹ *The Christological Controversy*, 179.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 179-180.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 182.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 206.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* He refers to Grillmeier (1975), 446. McGuckin recognises that this 'has become so often repeated in subsequent European analyses depending on him'.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 207.

make the soul the primary christological category is, for McGuckin, “a profoundly new and thoroughly christianised sense of the doctrine of personhood.... This was the very heart of Cyril’s genius”.⁶⁶ He elaborates on his claim later, saying that prior to Cyril, Christianity had accepted either Semitic or Platonic anthropology.⁶⁷ The Semitic view supposed a human being to be not simply a soul, or body, or spirit, but a relation of all three, whereas the latter view supposed a human being to be captive in his body which possessed an animal, or non-rational soul. Ultimately, a human being was a mind, trapped within the body. It was, he claims, “Cyril’s ultimate achievement to present the blue-print for a final resolution of a definitive christian anthropology—one that was wholly redefined in terms of the incarnation, and which synthesised the biblical and Hellenistic insights”.⁶⁸ McGuckin agrees that Cyril affirms Christ to be a complete human being, possessing both body and soul, else he could not save. However, McGuckin’s picture of Cyril’s understanding of the human soul in Christ places much less stress on the soul than does, say, T. F. Torrance. Still, he too concludes that Cyril perceives the presence of a human soul in Christ.

These are the conclusions of many able scholars with regard to Cyril’s acceptance or rejection of the presence of a rational human soul in Christ. As we have seen, scholars continue to disagree about Cyril’s anthropology with regard to the person of Christ, and in particular whether or not a rational human soul is present. It will be of great benefit at this point to review his description of the human φύσις of Christ, by examining his vocabulary and the relationship between the terms he employs. In addition, we need to review what Cyril says about the human actions and experiences of Christ. We intend to summarise Cyril’s own description of the human φύσις of Christ and consider the implications of such a description. We will also examine the images he uses to illustrate his statements concerning the humanity of Christ.

Cyril’s Description of the Human φύσις of Christ

To discover Cyril’s answer to the question of Christ’s human soul, it will be necessary to investigate how he describes Christ as a human being. Cyril employs a number of different terms to describe the

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 224.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 225.

humanity of Christ. The most prominent are flesh (σάρξ), human being (ἄνθρωπος), body (σῶμα), humanity (ἄνθρωπότης), and the form of a slave (ἡ μορφή δούλου). In examining how Cyril uses these descriptions and the clarifications he provides along with them, we will be able to see what he believes about Christ's human life. We will now look at what he says about each of these terms and how he uses them.

Flesh (σάρξ)

Cyril's favourite term for describing the humanity of Christ is σάρξ, drawn from one of the two *loci* of Scripture which he frequently quotes: John 1:14, "The Word became flesh". In addition, the Fathers at Nicaea had confessed one God, the Almighty Father, maker of all things both visible and invisible, the one Lord Jesus Christ his Son, and the Holy Spirit. In addition, they said that the Son of God, being himself true God from true God (ἐκ Θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ Θεὸς ἀληθινός), became Incarnate (σαρκωθῆναι).⁶⁹ This became the pattern for subsequent christology, and the standard of orthodox thinking about the person of Christ. Cyril not only appealed to Nicaea and John 1:14 as a defence of his own christology, but contrasted the teaching of Nestorius with their confessions about Christ. It has been Cyril's tendency to describe the humanity of Christ as σάρξ that has led Liébaert, Grillmeier, and others to classify him as a Logos-sarx theologian. Cyril uses the word throughout his writing career, from early works such as the *Thesaurus* to perhaps his final work, the christological treatise *Quod Unus sit Christus*. There are a number of different formulae in which Cyril uses σάρξ with reference to the human nature of Christ. By far the most frequent expression is directly taken from the passage just cited above. In the *Thesaurus*, he writes that ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος γέγονε σάρξ.⁷⁰ He anathematizes anyone who denies that the Word has become flesh.⁷¹ In his explanation of this anathema, Cyril makes clear that he confesses Emmanuel to be God the Word become flesh (σαρκωθέντα).⁷² In one of his first corre-

⁶⁹ *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:17.^{2ff}; PG 76:296D); *inter alia*.

⁷⁰ *Op. cit.* (PG 75:264C). See also *ibid.* (369B); *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:18.³; PG 76:297C); *QUSC* (PG 75:1273A); *Scholia* (PG 75:1274C, 1396Bff); *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:38.¹⁷; PG 77:116B); *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:15.⁶; PG 77:21A); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:17.⁴, 21.⁴¹; PG 76:20D, 33A); *Answers to Tiberius* (W 158.⁹⁻¹¹).

⁷¹ *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:41.⁵⁻⁷; PG 77:120D).

⁷² *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:19.⁸; PG 76:300D). See also *Scholia* (PG 75:1391B); *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:15.³; PG 77:21A).

spondences with Nestorius, Cyril says that Scripture does not teach that the Word joined a human πρόσωπον to himself, but that he γέγονε σάρξ, which means that he shared in our flesh and blood.⁷³ In another passage he indicates that the Logos, though having become flesh and blood (γεγονώς σαρκὸς καὶ αἵματος), remained what he was before, that is, Son of the Father by nature and truly.⁷⁴ In a work which marks the beginning of the Nestorian Controversy, he explains that ἐν ἐσχάτοις δὲ τοῦ αἰῶνος καιροῖς the Word γέγονε σάρξ.⁷⁵ Cyril's fascination both with John's claim and with the confession of Nicaea is evident in his frequent use of this formula.

Cyril uses another formula in which the humanity of Christ is σάρξ, with a slightly different nuance from the previous one. This time, he says that the Word made human flesh his own.⁷⁶ He has done this by means of a human birth, which he has undergone in order to become an ἄνθρωπος. Cyril is not implying that he has joined another individual to himself, but that, in an ineffable manner, the Word has taken for himself from the Virgin genuine human σάρξ. In doing so he [the Word] has made the properties of the flesh his own (ἐποιήσατο ἴδια τὰ τῆς σαρκός)⁷⁷ This includes the weaknesses and sufferings of the σάρξ, as it is a corruptible human flesh that the Word has taken as his own.⁷⁸ Quoting the Apostle Paul, he says that in becoming flesh and in taking ownership of human σάρξ, the Word who has been manifested in the flesh (ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί).⁷⁹ Cyril claims that Christ is God in flesh (Θεὸς ἐν σαρκί).⁸⁰ The Incarnation, then, is solely concerned with the economy of the Word with his flesh (μετὰ σαρκός).⁸¹ The Word has taken for himself flesh and blood and become like us (καθ' ἡμᾶς).⁸² It is by the taking of human flesh from the Virgin that God has himself become like us. He has taken human flesh (σὰρξ ἀνθρώπου) into his possession.⁸³ In becoming Incarnate,

⁷³ *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:28.¹⁵; PG 77:48D).

⁷⁴ *QUSC* (PG 75:1297D).

⁷⁵ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:15.¹¹; PG 77:21AB).

⁷⁶ *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:25.²⁰; PG 76:312C).

⁷⁷ *Ep.* 55 (ACO 1.1.4:54.²³; PG 77:301D). See also *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:63.²⁴; PG 76:137B); *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:21.^{34ff}; PG 77:36CD).

⁷⁸ *QUSC* (PG 75:1328D). Cf. *Thesaurus* (PG 75:396C).

⁷⁹ *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:17.³¹; PG 76:297C).

⁸⁰ *QUSC* (PG 75:1312C).

⁸¹ *Ep.* 46 (ACO 1.1.6: 159.¹; PG 77:240D).

⁸² *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:15.^{25, 27}; PG 76:17A).

⁸³ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:57.³²⁻³³; PG 76:121D).

the Logos has participated in blood and flesh (κεκοινώνηκεν αἵματος καὶ σαρκὸς ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος).⁸⁴

The Logos is also said to have dwelt in the flesh (ἐνοικήσαντος τῇ σαρκί).⁸⁵ However, this is not a “simple indwelling”, but the birth of the Word according to flesh.⁸⁶ Through the indwelling of human σάρξ the Word made it incorruptible.⁸⁷ This was all possible because he was born according to the manner of human σάρξ.⁸⁸ Therefore, Christ’s birth was the very own human birth of the Logos of God, through which he became Incarnate.⁸⁹ The Nicene statement that the Word became Incarnate means nothing other than that he was born according to the σάρξ.⁹⁰ Found frequently in Cyril’s Nestorian-era writings in particular is the description of Christ as the union of God the Word and σάρξ. As we have seen, he says that the Word γέγονε σάρξ. He defines what that formula means by stating, τουτέστιν ἡνώθη σαρκί ψυχὴν ἐχούσῃ τὴν λογικὴν.⁹¹ He qualifies the description further by saying that the union is καθ’ ὑπόστασιν.⁹² Emmanuel is, then, the real union of the Logos of God and human σάρξ, which means nothing other than that he has become a genuine and real ἄνθρωπος.⁹³

Now that we have demonstrated the various formulae in which Cyril uses σάρξ, we should examine what he says about the intended meaning of the term. As we noticed in the introductory section of this chapter, there has been widespread disagreement among scholars over what Cyril believed about the σάρξ of Christ. One interpretation is that Cyril used σάρξ to mean unanimated corporeality; in other words, a soulless shell. Another interpretation is that he meant by it a pre-existent human nature. A final interpretation is that Cyril used σάρξ with reference to Christ being a complete human being.

⁸⁴ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:18.¹²; PG 77:28C).

⁸⁵ *Thesaurus* (PG 75:397C).

⁸⁶ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:31.¹⁻³; PG 76:56B).

⁸⁷ *Ep.* 45 (ACO 1.1.6:155.⁸⁻⁹; PG 77:233CD).

⁸⁸ *Ep.* 45 (ACO 1.1.61:52.^{15ff}; PG 77:229D); *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:28.²¹; PG 77:48D).

⁸⁹ *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:27.⁵⁻¹³; PG 77:45CD); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:16.^{41ff}; PG 76:20D); *Scholia* (PG 75:1400C).

⁹⁰ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:29.^{18ff}; PG 76:49D).

⁹¹ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:15.¹¹⁻¹², 13.³²⁻³³; PG 77:21AB, 17C).

⁹² *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:40.³; PG 77:116D). See also *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:26.²⁷; PG 77:45B); *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1: PG 77:28D); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:24.³⁰, 30.³⁸; PG 76:40B, 56A).

⁹³ *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:28.¹⁵⁻¹⁶; PG 77:48D); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:17.³⁻⁴; PG 76:20D).

Cyril first says that the σάρξ is of a nature other than (ἐτέρα) the Logos of God.⁹⁴ This not only safeguards Cyril against heretical views such as that the Word brought the flesh with him from heaven, or fashioned it from the divine *ousia*, but it also preserves the important christological criterion that Christ became a genuine human being. He also says that the σάρξ is not *homoousios* with the Word.⁹⁵ This is an additional argument against the notion of a flesh which is of divine, rather than human origin. Cyril is then able to state confidently that God the Word become σάρξ is conjoined with us (καθ' ἡμᾶς) in everything except sin.⁹⁶ He has come into our nature by means of the flesh, and is subsequently said to be like us.⁹⁷ The σάρξ which the Incarnate Word took for himself is the same flesh as other human beings possess. The sole exception is sin.

In an early work Cyril states that γέγονε σὰρξ ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος, τοῦτέστιν ἄνθρωπος.⁹⁸ He uses this exact construction in numerous other places through his writing career. In his great christological treatise, *Quod unus sit Christus*, he writes that γέγονε σὰρξ ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος, τοῦτέστιν ἄνθρωπος.⁹⁹ Cyril states that becoming σάρξ means that the Word has shared in blood and flesh and has been born as an ἄνθρωπος without abandoning his Divine nature.¹⁰⁰ In an anathema against those who deny that Christ was truly God (Θεὸς κατὰ ἀλήθειαν), he explains that the Word participated in blood and flesh and γέγονε ἄνθρωπος.¹⁰¹ It is the ἔθος of Scripture to speak of ἄνθρωπος as σάρξ, as illustrated in a passage from the Gospel of Luke: ὄψεται πᾶσα σὰρξ τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ Θεοῦ.¹⁰² In his exposition of the Nicene Creed he says again that it is the ἔθος of Scripture to use σάρξ alone when referring to the whole man (ὅλος ἄνθρωπος).¹⁰³ This time he quotes Joel's prophecy that God will pour out his Spirit on all flesh.¹⁰⁴ God is not indicating that he will give his Spirit to soulless bodies, but to ἀνθρώποι of soul and body. Cyril explicitly states that

⁹⁴ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:33.¹¹⁻¹³; PG 76:61A).

⁹⁵ *Ep.* 46 (ACO 1.1.6:158.²¹⁻²³; PG 77:240C).

⁹⁶ *QUSC* (PG 75:1365D).

⁹⁷ *Scholia* (PG 75:1376B). Only a Latin translation is available.

⁹⁸ *Thesaurus* (PG 75:264C). See also *ibid.* (369B); *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:26.²⁷⁻²⁸; PG 77:45C); *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:40.²⁵⁻²⁷, 41.⁸⁻¹⁰; PG 77:120C, 121A).

⁹⁹ *Op. cit.* (PG 75:1273A, 1312A, 1340D).

¹⁰⁰ *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:28.¹⁶; PG 77:48D).

¹⁰¹ *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:20.^{17ff}; PG 76:304B). See also *Scholia* (PG 75:1396B); *Answers to Tiberius* (W 158).

¹⁰² Cf. Luke 3:6.

¹⁰³ *Ep.* 55 (ACO 1.1.4:54.³⁰; PG 77:304A).

¹⁰⁴ Joel 3:1 LXX.

the flesh to which the Logos was truly united possessed a human soul.¹⁰⁵ He reinforces his usage of σάρξ to mean ἄνθρωπος by stating, ἀληθῶς Υἱὸς γέγονε σάρξ, ἤγουν τέλειος ἄνθρωπος.¹⁰⁶ Thus, when Cyril says that the Word became σάρξ, he means *homo perfectus*, a complete man of flesh and soul.

In addition, the union of God and σάρξ did not damage nor diminish the essential nature of the flesh.¹⁰⁷ The human flesh remained human flesh, with all of its usual properties. In addition, the fact that the Divine nature of Christ and the human flesh are of different *ousiai* is not abolished in the Incarnation.¹⁰⁸ To claim that the two were now of the same *ousia* would imply some sort of fusion of the two natures, which Cyril denies.¹⁰⁹ The human σάρξ was not transformed or changed into being a part of the Divine *ousia*.¹¹⁰ He says that the flesh did not become divinity (Θεότης), but rather has become divine (θείαν), just as the σάρξ of another human being would be called human (ἄνθρωπινη).¹¹¹ He therefore uses the term in two ways. First, the Word has become flesh, and therefore *is* σάρξ. As Cyril has explained, this is a use of one part of the whole as a reference to the whole. Thus, σάρξ means ἄνθρωπος. Second, the Word possesses his own σάρξ. These two formulae are not contradictory. Instead, as we have seen, Cyril says that the Word has possession of his flesh in the same way that other human beings do. He also qualifies flesh by saying that it is ensouled. Consequently, Cyril must be understood to be stating that Christ is an ἄνθρωπος of body and rational soul. Though he has his own σάρξ with a soul, he does so as other human beings do. It appears that Cyril is trying to be true to the Scriptural description of the Incarnation as the Word becoming flesh, while acknowledging that by σάρξ is intended ἄνθρωπος. It remains to see how Cyril holds together his statements first, that the Word *became flesh*, and second, that the Word *was united to flesh*.

¹⁰⁵ *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:38.¹⁷; PG 77:116B); *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:13.³³, 15.¹¹⁻¹²; PG 77:17C, 21B); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:33.⁸, 51.¹⁵; PG 76:61A, 105D); *Scholia* (PG 75:1396B).

¹⁰⁶ *QUSC* (PG 75:1277B).

¹⁰⁷ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:76.¹⁷⁻¹⁸; PG 76:168D).

¹⁰⁸ *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:26.²⁵⁻²⁷; PG 77:45C).

¹⁰⁹ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:16.⁴²; PG 76:20D). See Chapter Five above.

¹¹⁰ *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:35.²¹⁻²²; PG 77:169D); *Ep.* 40 (ACO 1.1.4:30.²⁻⁴; PG 77:200B); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:22.²⁻³; PG 76:33A); *Scholia* (PG 75:1396B).

¹¹¹ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:46.³³⁻³⁵; PG 76:96A).

Human Body (σῶμα τὸ ἀνθρώπινον)

Another name which Cyril gives to the human component in Christ is human body (σῶμα τὸ ἀνθρώπινον). Like σάρξ, σῶμα is to be found in a number of different formulae. In his *Scholia de Incarnatione* he says that the Word γέγονε σῶμα. He explains that this means σάρξ with a rational human soul.¹¹² In this formula, Cyril says that the σῶμα of Christ is synonymous with the σάρξ of Christ. Also, he states that the Word has made a human body his own by means of a union (ἴδιον ποιησάμενος σῶμα τὸ ἀνθρώπινον καθ' ἑνωσιν).¹¹³ The genuine human σῶμα belongs to God the Word. Christ, then, is the union of the Word with a human body.¹¹⁴ Finally, the Logos is said to have assumed a human body and made it his own.¹¹⁵

In describing this human σῶμα, Cyril states clearly that a rational human soul (ψυχὴ λογικὴ) was present.¹¹⁶ He says that the Word made our σῶμα his own and proceeded from the Virgin as an ἄνθρωπος. As a human being, the body of Christ possessed a rational soul.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, the body is said to be the seed of Abraham, and a human soul is said to be present.¹¹⁸ Thus, the Nicene statement that the Word was Incarnate (σαρκωθῆναι) entails the affirmation that the body (σῶμα) was indeed ensouled with a rational soul (ἐνψύχωτο ψυχῇ νοερά).¹¹⁹ Consequently, the σῶμα is a fully human σῶμα, which is corruptible and capable of suffering like any other human body.¹²⁰ The σῶμα of Christ is complete, and he has through it become like us in every way except sin.¹²¹ After the resurrection, the corruptible human body has been made incorruptible and without its weaknesses.¹²² However, this does not mean that the σῶμα was transformed into the Godhead, or was diminished or damaged in any

¹¹² *Op. cit.* (PG 75:1380B).

¹¹³ *QUSC* (PG 75:1273A).

¹¹⁴ *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:19,¹¹; PG 76:300C); *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:28.²⁰⁻²¹; PG 77:48D); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:87.¹⁷⁻¹⁹; PG 76:197B).

¹¹⁵ *Thesaurus* (PG 75:396C).

¹¹⁶ *QUSC* (PG 75:1273D); *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:18,²⁶; PG 76:300C); *Ep.* 46 (ACO 1.1.6:158.²²⁻²³; PG 77:240C); *Scholia* (PG 75:1397A).

¹¹⁷ *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:28.²⁰⁻²¹; PG 77:48D); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:87.¹⁸; PG 76:197B).

¹¹⁸ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:62.²⁴⁻²⁶; PG 76:133D).

¹¹⁹ *Ep.* 46 (ACO 1.1.6:158.¹⁴; PG 77:240B).

¹²⁰ *Thesaurus* (PG 75:396C); *Ep.* 45 (ACO 1.1.6:156.¹⁻³; PG 77:236B).

¹²¹ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:59.²²⁻²⁴; PG 76:128A). *QUSC* (PG 75:1265D).

¹²² *Ep.* 45 (ACO 1.1.6:156.¹⁻³; PG 77:236B).

way.¹²³ The Word and the human body are of different *ousiai* and remain so even in the union. The σῶμα is not *homoousios* with the Godhead.¹²⁴ Still, the body is rightly said to be divine (θεῖον) in the same way that the body of an ordinary human being is called human (ἀνθρώπινον).¹²⁵

An interesting statement Cyril makes about the σῶμα of Christ is that it is not a container in which the Word dwells.¹²⁶ The context in which he raises the issue is in his response to those who claim that the Word left heaven empty of his Godhead when he became Incarnate. This statement implies that the Logos of God is a body in his own nature, and is thus “quantitatively measurable”.¹²⁷ In which case he would be limited in his expanse, and occupy a particular place (τόπος) like other created things. But God is not corporeal, is not constrained by any limits, and does not occupy a particular τόπος. Rather, he fills all things and is present in all places. Therefore, though the Word has become a human being and has manifest himself through a human σῶμα, he has not been present in the body as though in a receptacle. The spatial limits of the σῶμα do not restrict him. We can see that with σῶμα, Cyril intends that Christ is a human being. He uses it in the same manner as he does σάρξ. To say that Christ has a human body with a human soul means that he does so like other human beings. It is for this reason that Cyril can also state that Christ became a human body and soul. This takes us back to his earlier claim that an ἄνθρωπος is a body and soul.

Humanity (ἀνθρωπότης)

Cyril frequently attributes the term ἀνθρωπότης to the human nature of Christ. He says the Christ is from both the perfect Word of God (ἐκ τελείας ὑποστάσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου) and from perfect humanity (ἐξ ἀνθρωπότητος τελείως).¹²⁸ Cyril states that Emmanuel is both humanity and divinity at the same time.¹²⁹ Furthermore, Christ is said to be the divine in the ἀνθρωπότης.¹³⁰ The Word remained God

¹²³ *Scholia* (PG 75:1380C); *Ep.* 46 (ACO 1.1.6:159.^{9ff}; PG 77:241AB). See also Chapter Five.

¹²⁴ *QUSC* (PG 75:1289B).

¹²⁵ *Ep.* 45 (ACO 1.1.6:156.⁵⁻⁶; PG 77:236B).

¹²⁶ *Answers to Tiberius* (W 146.^{14ff}); *Scholia* (PG 75:1371C, 1398C).

¹²⁷ Wickham's translation. See also *Answers to Tiberius* (W 140.^{5ff}).

¹²⁸ *Scholia* (PG 75:1377C); *QUSC* (PG 75:1289B).

¹²⁹ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:73.¹¹⁻¹²; PG 76:161A).

¹³⁰ *Scholia* (PG 75:1398C).

even though he was in the humanity.¹³¹ Additionally, the Logos of God is said to have appropriated *ἀνθρωπότης* to himself and made it his own.¹³² In order to become Incarnate, the Word assumed genuine humanity.¹³³

At least three formulae are concerned with the Word allowing himself to be subject to the limitations, or laws, or the *ἀνθρωπότης*. Cyril firstly states that the Logos economically descended into the limitations of the humanity.¹³⁴ Second, the Word subjected himself to the limitations of the *ἀνθρωπότης*.¹³⁵ Thirdly, in becoming a human being, God the Logos did not despise the limitations of the humanity.¹³⁶ Similarly, Cyril writes that the Word has not rejected the poverty of humanity.¹³⁷ Christ, then, is the union of the Word with humanity (*ἡ ἔνωσις τοῦ Λόγου πρὸς τὸ ἀνθρώπινον*).¹³⁸ The proper faith, he maintains, is to confess that the Word naturally united to himself humanity (*ἐνώσας ἑαυτῷ καθ' ὑπόστασιν τὸ ἀνθρώπινον*).¹³⁹ Because the Virgin gave birth to God naturally united to flesh (*Θεὸς ἐνωθέντα σαρκὶ καθ' ὑπόστασιν*), she is *Θεοτόκος*.¹⁴⁰ The humanity that the Word has united to himself is of a different *ousia* from the Word.¹⁴¹ Therefore, the humanity has not changed into the divinity, but it is genuine humanity like that which other *ἄνθρωποι* possess.¹⁴² They remain different even in the union, and are not fused together. In addition, the humanity of the Word become flesh is his own, and does not belong to someone else.¹⁴³ This confession is in obvious contrast to Cyril's interpretation of Nestorius' christology in which the Word joined to himself a pre-existent human being. Christ's humanity is a complete (*τέλειος*) humanity, and even in the union is preserved as such.¹⁴⁴ Cyril explicitly states that Incarnate means complete *ἀνθρωπότης*.¹⁴⁵ The union neither implies nor requires that the

¹³¹ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:21.²⁷⁻²⁸; PG 77:36B); *QUSC* (PG 75:1269D).

¹³² *Scholia* (PG 75:1374C); *QUSC* (PG 75:1277C).

¹³³ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:18.^{4ff.}; PG 77:28C).

¹³⁴ *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:19.⁹⁻¹⁰; PG 76:301A).

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.5:24.^{9ff.}; PG 76:309B).

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.5:19.²²⁻²⁸; PG 76:301B).

¹³⁷ *QUSC* (PG 75:1261C).

¹³⁸ *Scholia* (PG 75:1377B).

¹³⁹ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:44.³³⁻³⁴; PG 76:89C).

¹⁴⁰ *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:40.³⁻⁴; PG 77:116D).

¹⁴¹ *QUSC* (PG 75:1292A).

¹⁴² *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:73.¹¹⁻¹², 44.³³⁻³⁴; PG 76:161A, 89C).

¹⁴³ *QUSC* (PG 75:1277C). See Chapter Four above.

¹⁴⁴ *Scholia* (PG 75:1377CD).

¹⁴⁵ *Ep.* 46 (ACO 1.1.6:160.²¹; PG 77:244A).

humanity be damaged or diminished in any way.¹⁴⁶ Consequently, Christ is considered to be fully human in all ways, except for sin.¹⁴⁷ Christ possesses ἀνθρωπότης precisely because he is an ἄνθρωπος.

Form of a Slave (ἡ μορφή δούλου)

A further description of the humanity of Christ that Cyril uses quite frequently is μορφή τοῦ δούλου. This phrase emphasises the *kenotic* character of the Incarnation, and is derived from a favourite *locus* of Scripture for Cyril, the *Carmen Christi*. He maintains that the Word who is God in becoming ἄνθρωπος, economically came to be in the form of a slave (γέγονε οἰκονομικῶς ἐν τῇ τοῦ δούλου μορφῇ).¹⁴⁸ The Incarnation is said to entail the Word taking on the form of a slave (λαβὼν μορφήν δούλου).¹⁴⁹ He did not take to himself another human being, who by nature is a slave, but actually became one himself. Although the Logos of God is free according to his own divine nature, in becoming Incarnate he has lowered himself to the human level of servitude and slavery. Human nature is said to be enslaved, and by becoming an ἄνθρωπος, the Word has come in the form of a slave.

A Human Being (ἄνθρωπος)

The real issue for Cyril, then, was how to understand the fact that the Son of God was a human being (ἄνθρωπος). One of Cyril's preferred ways of describing the Incarnation of the Word, is to say that he has become a human being (γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος).¹⁵⁰ This formulae is used a countless number of times by Cyril throughout his entire ministry. In addition, he also uses the term from Nicaea, ἐνανθρωπήσας.¹⁵¹ He claims that Christ is an ἄνθρωπος in his pre-Nestorian writings, as well as those from the Nestorian and post-Nestorian eras of his ministry. In one of his earliest works, the *Thesaurus*, he says that the Word

¹⁴⁶ *QUSC* (PG 75:1293A).

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1269D).

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1269C).

¹⁴⁹ *Ep.* 46 (ACO 1.1.6:159.³; PG 77:240D); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:15.²⁵, 44.³⁴, 63.³⁷; PG 76:17A, 89C, 137C).

¹⁵⁰ There are countless instances of Cyril's use of this phrase to describe Christ. See *Thesaurus* (PG 75:329A, 369C, 396B, 397D); *QUSC* (PG 1265B, 1275A, 1304D); *Scholia* (PG 75:1385A); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:22.², 28.⁶, 62.³⁹; PG 76:33A, 48B, 136B); *inter alia*.

¹⁵¹ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:15.⁴, 19.³, 30; PG 77:21A, 29C, 32B); *Homilia diversa* 2 (ACO 1.1.2:95.¹⁰; PG 77:988C); *inter alia*.

of God became flesh, which means a human being (γένεονε σάρξ, τουτέστιν ἄνθρωπος),¹⁵² and that while he remained God, he became an ἄνθρωπος.¹⁵³ He calls Christ an ἄνθρωπος in one of his first Nestorian Controversy-era works, his *Letter to the Monks of Egypt*.¹⁵⁴ His *Third Letter to Nestorius*, as well as the appended *Anathemas*, both written near the beginning of the controversy with Nestorius, each refers to Christ as an ἄνθρωπος, as does his collection *Adversus Nestorium*.¹⁵⁵ In addition, his later works *Scholia de Incarnatione*, and *Quod Unus sit Christus*, each maintain that Christ was an ἄνθρωπος.¹⁵⁶

He explains more fully what he means by ἄνθρωπος by stating that in becoming a human being, the Word has joined us (καθ' ἡμᾶς).¹⁵⁷ Thus, though he is free in his own nature, the Logos of God submits to the servanthood of humanity in the Incarnation. Though he is enthroned in his own nature and worshipped as God, in becoming a human being he has humbled himself and even worships alongside us. Hence, the *mysterium Christi* is that the one who is over all creation has become a human being, and therefore has become in all ways like us, acting and speaking as we do.¹⁵⁸ By referring to Christ as an ἄνθρωπος, Cyril means that he is like every other human being. Therefore, while remaining *homoousios* with God the Father even in the Incarnate state, the Word has become *homoousios* with us (γένεονεν ἡμῖν ὁμοούσιος) because he has become a human being like us (γένεονεν ἄνθρωπος καθ' ἡμᾶς).¹⁵⁹ That is to say that he has become a genuine human being (γένεονε κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἄνθρωπος).¹⁶⁰ Cyril says this can be seen from the Old Testament account of Jacob's all-night encounter with a man beside the waters of Jabok.¹⁶¹ Although it was a human being (ἄνθρωπος) with whom Jacob wrestled, he says that he had seen God face to face. This theophany is an affirmation from Scripture that Christ was indeed a real human being. He can make such a deduction because, as we saw previously, the aim or purpose

¹⁵² *Op. cit.* (PG 75:264C).

¹⁵³ *Ibid.* (PG 75:329A).

¹⁵⁴ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:15.⁴, 19.³, 30; PG 77:21A, 29C, 32B).

¹⁵⁵ *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:35.¹⁹; PG 77:109C); *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:41.⁹; PG 77:121A); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:22.², 28.⁶, 62.³⁹, 63.²⁷; PG 76:33A, 48B, 136B, 137B).

¹⁵⁶ *Scholia* (PG 75:1385A); *QUSC* (PG 1265B, 1275A, 1304D); *inter alia*.

¹⁵⁷ *Homilia diversa* 2 (ACO 1.1.2:95.¹¹; PG 77:988C); *Scholia* (PG 75:1385A); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:64.²⁴; PG 76:140BC).

¹⁵⁸ *QUSC* (PG 75:1325B).

¹⁵⁹ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:65.²⁶, 66.³⁹; PG 76:141C, 145B).

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:65.³¹; PG 76:141D).

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:66.^{14ff}; PG 76:144CD). Cf. Genesis 32:22ff.

(σκοπός) of Scripture is to point towards the Word who is Incarnate and has become an ἄνθρωπος.¹⁶²

That Christ is a true and genuine ἄνθρωπος, *homoousios* with other human beings, implies that he possessed both a human body and a rational human soul. Cyril explicitly states that because Christ is an ἄνθρωπος just like us, he possesses a rational soul and a body (ψυκὴ καὶ σῶμα).¹⁶³ He reiterates this when he gives a brief synopsis of his anthropology, articulating his understanding of the process by which a human being comes into existence.¹⁶⁴ Flesh is born of flesh, meaning that the woman provides the body (σῶμα) or flesh (σάρξ) of the child. It is God—the Demiurge—who performs the act of providing a soul to the child (ποιεῖται τὴν ψύχωσιν). However, the woman is said to give birth to the entire ἄνθρωπος, which means one who is both a soul and a body (ψυκὴ καὶ σῶμα). Consequently, when Christ is said to be an ἄνθρωπος, it means that he has been born from the Virgin, possessing both a human body and a rational human soul, just as other ἄνθρωποι are born from their mothers. When one says ἄνθρωπος, Cyril says, one means the soul and the body together.¹⁶⁵ It would be ignorant and absurd to say that a body by itself is an ἄνθρωπος; rather it is the σῶμα ἀνθρώπου.¹⁶⁶ A human being (ἄνθρωπος) is the real union (ἔνωσις φυσικὴ) of body and soul.¹⁶⁷ Cyril's use of the term ἄνθρωπος to describe the humanity of Christ means *homo perfectus*, a complete human being of body and soul. One will recall that Liébaert interpreted Cyril's anthropology to be something different from this. Diepen, though, has challenged Liébaert's interpretation quite convincingly.¹⁶⁸ Diepen argues that Cyril had a biblical, rather than Platonic, anthropology, in which a human being was body and soul.¹⁶⁹ Joining him in interpreting Cyril to have a biblical anthropology include Wilken¹⁷⁰ and Jouassard.¹⁷¹ To affirm

¹⁶² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:66.³⁶⁻⁴⁰, PG 76:145B).

¹⁶³ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:64.²⁴, PG 76:140C). See also *Scholia* (PG 75:1385A); *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:26.²⁶, 28.²¹).

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:24.^{11ff}, PG 76:37Df).

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:24.¹¹⁻¹⁷, 105.²³, PG 76:37D, 244D).

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:51.¹⁵⁻²³, PG 76:108A).

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.* Cyril explains that by ἔνωσις φυσικὴ he intends real or true (ἀληθῆ) union, see *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:19.², PG 76:300C).

¹⁶⁸ H. Diepen, *Aux origines de l'anthropologie de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 1957).

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 35ff.

¹⁷⁰ See Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind*.

¹⁷¹ See 'Un problème d'anthropologie et de christologie chez saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *RSR* 43 (1955), 361-378; 'Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie et la schéma de l'incarnation verbe-chair', *RSR* 44 (1956), 234-242.

that Cyril's anthropology is the same as that of Apollinarius—that is, trichotomist—is not only to leave him open to the charge of Apollinarianism, but is also to miss the obvious statements Cyril makes about the make-up of a human being. It is most accurate, therefore, to say that Christ *is* an ἄνθρωπος, that is, he is a human body and a rational human soul, in the same way that other human beings are.

This is not to imply that Christ is a human being other than the Word who has become an ἄνθρωπος.¹⁷² The Word has not been juxtaposed to an ἄνθρωπος. Cyril insists this to be the case on a number of occasions, primarily in response to Nestorius' συνάφεια.¹⁷³ As we have seen, he accused Nestorius of claiming Christ to be the juxtaposition of God the Word and another human being. Cyril denies that this picture of Christ is accurate, maintaining instead that he is the Logos who has become an ἄνθρωπος. Therefore, although Christ is a complete ἄνθρωπος, he is not a human being other than the Word, who himself has become Incarnate. He says that the Incarnation is not the Word assuming a pre-existent ἄνθρωπος, but the Word becoming ἄνθρωπος.¹⁷⁴ He insists that Christ *is* a complete human being, rather than that the Word has assumed, indwells, or joined himself to one. Therefore, Christ *is* a *homo perfectus*. As we have been able to see, the other terms Cyril uses to describe the human nature of Christ, some of which had led to accusations of Apollinarianism, are reconciled with his understanding of ἄνθρωπος, as they each seek to express the complete human life which the Word lived as the human being Jesus Christ.

Synonymous terms

These various descriptions of the human φύσις of Christ are seen to be used synonymously by Cyril. He says that the Logos γέγονε ἄνθρωπος, γέγονε σὰρξ, γέγονε σῶμα, and γέγονε ἡ μορφή δούλου.¹⁷⁵ Often the terms are used together in the same context, such as when Cyril says that the Word γέγονε σὰρξ, which means that he participated in blood and flesh like us, he made our σῶμα his own, and he

¹⁷² It will be remembered that we have examined this in Chapter Four.

¹⁷³ Cf. *QUSC* (PG 75:1301C, 1304D, 1308D); *Scholia* (PG 75:1385A); *Homilia diversa* 2 (ACO 1.1.2:95.²⁷; PG 77:989A); *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:15³⁻⁴, 19.¹⁰, 20.⁹⁻¹¹; PG 77:21A, 29D, 32D); *Ep.* 55 (ACO 1.1.4:54.³⁴⁻³⁶; PG 77:304A); *inter alia*.

¹⁷⁴ *Scholia* (PG 75:1385A).

¹⁷⁵ See *Thesaurus* (PG 397D); *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:15.⁶; PG 77:21A); *Scholia* (PG 75:1380B); and *QUSC* (PG 75:1269C), respectively.

proceeded from the woman as an ἄνθρωπος.¹⁷⁶ Also, he writes that the Logos of God has become ἄνθρωπος by uniting to himself the ἀνθρωπότης and taking the μορφή τοῦ δούλου.¹⁷⁷ Each of these terms describes both body and soul, which constitute a complete human being (τέλειος ἄνθρωπος). In each instance, Cyril wishes to indicate that the Word, in becoming a human being, has become just like all other human beings. The phrase γέγονε σὰρξ ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος, τοῦτέστιν ἄνθρωπος, which Cyril uses frequently, demonstrates that for him ἄνθρωπος and σὰρξ are interchangeable.¹⁷⁸ The terms are each used with reference to the same principle: the Word of God became a real and genuine human being, who is just like other human beings, and is therefore complete. Cyril conceives of Christ as a *homo perfectus*, a complete human existence which the Word lives in order to redeem the human race.

Analogies Concerning the Complete Humanity of Christ

Cyril employs some analogies to illustrate that the humanity of Christ is complete and undiminished in the Incarnation. As we will see, his emphasis is that there is no inherent need for Christ to be less than a complete human being. A nuance of this defence must be a rejection of the Apollinarian idea that there was a psychological, as opposed to spatial, need for the Logos to replace the human mind, or rational soul, in Christ. On the other hand, however, there must be involved here as well an argument against the Nestorian notion, at least in Cyril's interpretation of it, that the Word and the ἄνθρωπος to whom he is connected are somehow spatially related. Cyril is arguing that Christ can be one individual composed of two different things, without one of them being less than complete.

Body-soul

The first analogy is Cyril's favourite—the body and soul of a human being. An accusation made by the Orientals against Cyril's christology is recorded for us in Cyril's *Second Letter to Succensus*. The charge is that if what he maintains is true, that there is μία φύσις τοῦ

¹⁷⁶ *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:28.¹⁴⁻¹⁶; PG 77:48D).

¹⁷⁷ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:44.³³⁻³⁴; PG 76:89C).

¹⁷⁸ *Thesaurus* (PG 75:264C). See also *ibid.* (369B); *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:26.^{25ff}; PG 77:45BC); *Answers to Tiberius* (W 154.²⁵⁻²⁶).

λόγου σεσαρκωμένη, then there must have been a merger or mixture, resulting in the human nature (ἡ ἀνθρώπου φύσις) being diminished.¹⁷⁹ Cyril replies that his accusers do not recognise that Christ is the Word of God who has become man by means of a human birth and none other. Thus, there is but one living reality (μία φύσις)—Christ.¹⁸⁰ The fact that Christ is individual does not demand a mixture of the divinity and humanity such that one or both is diminished. In order to defend his claim, Cyril draws upon the analogy of body and soul. He says that man is formed from a body and a soul, two things which are not *homousios*. Even in the union, he says, the difference between them is not destroyed: they remain intact. In the same way, even in the union of divinity and humanity in Christ, the humanity is not diminished or abrogated. As we have seen, Cyril maintains that a human being is a real union of body and soul. Neither the soul nor the body must be incomplete for them to form together one ἄνθρωπος. Just as a human being *is* a complete body and a complete soul, so too is Christ complete God and a complete human being. No one would argue that the body of an ἄνθρωπος is less than complete, and there is, likewise, no reason to demand that the Christ is anything less than a complete ἄνθρωπος. Christ can be one individual without the humanity being destroyed or damaged.

Burning Bush

Cyril uses a Scriptural image to reiterate the point made previously about the human nature of Christ being complete, i.e., possessing both a human body and a human soul. In his treatise *Quod unus sit Christus*, he confronts the conclusion of his opponents that his hypostatic union deems necessary the consumption of the human nature (ἀνθρώπου φύσις) by the Word.¹⁸¹ Because of the excellence and greatness of God, it would be a reasonable conclusion that when united with flesh he would utterly overwhelm and consume it. How-

¹⁷⁹ *Ep.* 46 (ACO 1.1.6:159.^{9ff}; PG 77:241AB).

¹⁸⁰ Here, of course, is the source of great distress between Cyril and the Orientals. As we saw previously, when Cyril calls the humanity of Christ a φύσις, he means a human life, or condition. He says that both the divinity and the humanity are φύσεις. Therefore, when he uses the term to mean individual, living being, as he does here, he appears to be claiming that the two natures mixed to form one. Obviously, this is not his intention, and the lack of a concrete christological vocabulary is readily seen. Although even here he defends the μία φύσις formula, it takes a lesser role in his own christological predication as his ministry progresses.

¹⁸¹ *Op. cit.* (PG 75:1292Dff).

ever, this does not happen, Cyril argues. Although the Divine nature is superior to the human nature they both remain intact, neither being altered through a fusion or mixture. It should not be surprising that God would reach out to humankind in a way that appears impossible, for he is driven by his love for humankind. It is not impossible for God the Word to lower himself to the limits of a human existence (ἄνθρωπότης), although there is no natural communion between divinity and humanity. Cyril maintains that this union in which the flesh, which is naturally susceptible to consumption by the Divine nature, remains undiminished and thus complete, is illustrated by the account of God's visitation with Moses through the burning bush. By nature wood serves as fuel for fire, being consumed by it. Nevertheless, in this instance the fire rests upon the bush without destroying it. This is, in Cyril's mind, an analogy of the fact that in the Incarnation the human flesh of Christ is not damaged through the union. He does not say that the account is an image of the Incarnation, but of how God would, in Christ remain complete God while being a complete human being.

The Ark of the Covenant

Our final analogy that demonstrates the completeness of Christ's humanity is also an image from Scripture. Cyril introduces his paragraph by stating that the Word and the humanity (ἄνθρώπινον) exist in a union (ἔνωσις), yet are unconfused (ἀσύγχυτα).¹⁸² The image is the Ark of the Covenant that Moses was instructed by God to build.¹⁸³ The wood from which the Ark was build is said to be a type (τύπος) of Christ's body, his humanity. The precious gold is a type of the divine nature. The instruction to Moses was to cover the wood with the gold, both inside and out. Cyril perceives in the direction to cover the inside of the Ark a reference to the fact that Christ possessed a rational human soul. The fact that the wood, though covered completely with the gold, never ceased to be wood demonstrates for Cyril that the human φύσις or ὑπόστασις is not fused with the divine φύσις or ὑπόστασις, implying a diminishing of it, but is complete. The humanity does not cease to be humanity in its union with the Logos. Christ is nothing less than a complete ἄνθρωπος, a *homo perfectus*.

¹⁸² *Scholia* (PG 75:1380D).

¹⁸³ Cf. Exodus 25:10-11.

Concluding Remarks

A major theme in Cyril's soteriological thinking is that by assuming the humanity he has elevated and redeemed the nature of mankind. In other words, what he assumes, he saves. The reverse is also true: what he has not assumed he has not saved (ὃ γὰρ μὴ προσείληπται, οὐδὲ σέσωσται).¹⁸⁴ For this reason, the human soul of Christ has an important place in Cyril's christology. Christ must be a complete human being in order to redeem humanity. However, it would be overstating the case to say that the human soul of Christ had a *strategic* role to play in salvation.¹⁸⁵ The provision of redemption is wholly the work of God the Logos, who uses the means of the Incarnation to effect it. Thus, the soul is not a co-operating force in the soteriological process, though it is a necessary participant. The human soul, along with the human body, belonged to the Word and was the instrument he used to bring about the salvation of humankind. Consequently, the claims that Cyril makes about σάρξ, σῶμα, and other terms meaning τέλειος ἄνθρωπος must be taken seriously; not only for the sake of a coherent picture of Christ, but because of the important soteriological concerns that lay behind such claims. As we will see in the final chapter, Cyril believes that the only credible picture of Christ is one in which both complete divinity and complete humanity are present in Christ simultaneously. Consequently, we must not conclude that the human soul was irrelevant to Cyril or to his christology, or that he failed to recognise its importance in an orthodox picture of Christ.

The Matter of a Complete Human Being

Consequently, when Cyril says that the humanity of Christ is both a φύσις and a ὑπόστασις, he means a complete human existence.¹⁸⁶ Christ, the Word become ἄνθρωπος, truly lives a life as a human being. For that reason, he says that Christ is the coming together by true union (συμβάσει τῇ καθ' ἑνωσιν ἀληθῆ) of divinity (Θεότης) and humanity *like ours* (ἀνθρωπότης καθ' ἡμᾶς).¹⁸⁷ There is no need to diminish the completeness of the human nature in order to achieve

¹⁸⁴ *Commentary on John* (PG 74:89CD); *Scholia* (PG 75:1388BC, 1397B); *QUSC* (PG 75:1332A-D).

¹⁸⁵ See Young, 'A Reconsideration', 110.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. *Scholia* (PG 75:1381A).

¹⁸⁷ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:73.²⁻⁴; PG 76:160D). My emphasis.

this phenomenon. In his correspondence with Succensus, Cyril responds to the question of how, if the human φύσις is made less than complete (τέλειος) by the union, could Christ be *homoousios* with us and *homoousios* with God at the same time.¹⁸⁸ His reply is that there is no need to consider the humanity to be less than complete. The idea of Incarnation denotes completeness with regard to the human nature. Therefore, the Son is as perfect in his humanity as in his divinity, because he is simultaneously God and man. This does not mean that the human φύσις or ὑπόστασις is a human individual whom the Logos has joined to himself. Instead, it means Christ himself is a true and complete human being. The φύσεις or ὑπόστασεις that together form Christ are not to be divided or separated from one another. When Cyril uses φύσις to describe either the human or divine element in Christ he does not do so in order to explain something about its individuality. Rather, the human φύσις or ὑπόστασις is the human condition, or a human existence that the Word makes for himself. Consequently, he subjects himself to the same human limits as other human beings, though in his own, divine nature he has no limitations. Though he operates in and through the tangible human body, and lives a genuine human life, the Word remains God and maintains his eternal, limitless life. This is the *mysterium Christi*.

In this chapter we have sought to examine Cyril's conception of the human nature of Christ, and in particular whether or not he believed that Christ possessed a human soul. We have seen that he uses a number of different terms to describe Christ's humanity. His favourite—σάρξ—is derived from a favourite Scriptural text, John 1:14: the Word γέγονε σάρξ. However, in using this word Cyril understands it to denote ἄνθρωπος, a complete human being of mind and body. This is also true of his other descriptions of the humanity of Christ. Therefore, these words are used synonymously throughout Cyril's ministry, both before and after 428. As others have convincingly argued, the evidence shows the essential character of Cyril's christology to be consistent before and after the Nestorian Controversy. In other words, σάρξ was used to mean ἄνθρωπος in his early and his later works. Consequently, when he says that the Word became man or flesh, or assumed a human body or the form of a slave, or that he has united to himself complete humanity, he is insisting that Christ was truly the Logos of God who has himself come and lived a complete human life, possessing both a body and soul, in order to redeem humankind. Christ was no mindless man, nor was he

¹⁸⁸ Ep. 46 (ACO 1.1.6:159.^{9ff}, PG 77:241AB).

God joined to a man, he was the Word in his own complete human existence.

The Question of Consistency

We have seen that Cyril consistently refers to the human component of Christ as *σάρξ* and *σῶμα* in both early and later works. Furthermore, in writings from before, during, and after the Nestorian Controversy he says that the Word became *ἄνθρωπος*. Earlier we observed that many scholars have regarded Cyril as a “Logos-sarx” theologian, and by this mean that Christ was the union of the Logos and human sarx. He certainly describes Christ in those terms. However, it is the underlying meaning of the Logos-sarx category which our preceding review has questioned. Categorising Cyril in such a manner usually implies that he, along with Apollinarius, conceived of Christ as the Word and a soulless human body. In addition, scholars who classify him as possessing a Logos-sarx christology argue that it was not until the Nestorian Controversy that Cyril recognised the need for, and began to propound the existence of, a human soul in Christ. This betrays the evidence, however, in which Cyril maintains that *σάρξ* means *ἄνθρωπος*. From a work written prior to the Nestorian Controversy we find him explaining that *γένετο σάρξ ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος, τοῦτέστιν ἄνθρωπος*.¹⁸⁹ In works in the beginning of and during the debate with Nestorius he uses the same construction.¹⁹⁰ Later in his career he says that *ἀληθῶς Υἱὸς γέγονε σάρξ, ἡγουν τέλειος ἄνθρωπος*.¹⁹¹ In each of these periods his terminology concerning the humanity of Christ is the same. This leads us to conclude, along with many others, firstly, that Cyril did perceive in Christ a human soul, and thus him to be an *ἄνθρωπος τέλειος*; and secondly, that the Logos-sarx category fails to regard the affirmation that *σάρξ* means *ἄνθρωπος*.

The presence of a human soul in Christ is made necessary for two reasons in Cyril’s mind: (1) soteriological, (2) christological. As we have seen clearly, Cyril insisted that for Christ to be the Saviour of humankind he must himself become one of us. He could not be an imperfect human being, such as proposed by Apollinarius, and offer redemption. Only what is assumed is saved. In addition, Cyril was

¹⁸⁹ *Thesaurus* (PG 75:264C, 369B).

¹⁹⁰ *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:26.²⁷⁻²⁸; PG 77:45C); *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:40.²⁵⁻²⁷, 41.⁸⁻¹⁰; PG 77:120C, 121A)

¹⁹¹ *QUSC* (PG 75:1277B).

indeed concerned with having a credible picture of Christ, and for more than soteriological reasons alone. It was imperative that the Scriptural claim that the Word γέγονε σάρξ and the Nicene statement that the Son of God became Incarnate (σαρκωθῆναι) and became a human being (ἐνανθρωπήσαι) be interpreted and understood properly. An ontological reason for Cyril's insistence on Christ being a *homo perfectus* existed alongside his soteriological reason. Cyril's claim that Christ is like other human beings in all things, with the exception that he was sinless, is no mere attempt to avoid heresy, but is a genuine declaration of his understanding of the *mysterium Christi*: Christ is an ἄνθρωπος just like other ἄνθρωποι.

Excursus: The Genuine Human Life of Christ

Cyril says that the Incarnation of the Word was not imaginary (φαντασία), but he proceeded through the constraints of the laws (νόμοι) of human nature and in reality became a human being (γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος ἀληθῶς).¹⁹² In other words, he lived a human life just as other human individuals live. He is thus subject to the same laws (νόμοι) as others. He did not shun these laws, or limits, but appropriated them to himself. There is no need to avoid attributing the human experiences to Christ.¹⁹³ He was a human being, and therefore acted like other human beings. This means that he became hungry, weary, and in need of sleep. Because he was human he possessed the weaknesses of the flesh. Christ, who is a genuine and not docetic human being, is said by Scripture to advance in stature, wisdom, and grace.¹⁹⁴ Cyril acknowledges this fact, stating that the flesh of Christ progresses according to the laws of its own nature (ἰδία φύσις), and that human nature (ἄνθρωπότης) advances in stature, wisdom, and grace. Christ grew in each of these areas according to his humanity because he is a human being (ἄνθρωπος). In addition, Christ hungers and is weary, and even is said to suffer according to the humanity.¹⁹⁵ What is appropriate for other human beings is appropriated to him, because he is a complete human being himself.

Cyril says that Christ allowed his flesh to proceed according to its own laws (ἰδιοι νόμοι), and that being weak according to the flesh

¹⁹² *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:17.¹⁸⁻²⁰; PG 76:21B).

¹⁹³ *QUSC* (PG 75:1328Cff).

¹⁹⁴ *QUSC* (PG 75:1332AB); citing Luke 2:52. Cf. *Scholia* (PG 75:1387BC).

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1332Df).

demonstrates that he is a human being (ἄνθρωπος).¹⁹⁶ Consequently, Christ was susceptible to death and decay.¹⁹⁷ To Succensus, Cyril writes that the body of Christ was prone to hunger, weariness, and other similar weaknesses, and also that it was corruptible.¹⁹⁸ It is Christ in his humanity who was weary, hungry, and thirsty, and who was crucified.¹⁹⁹ Because Christ was truly human he was susceptible to these weaknesses. Cyril finally acknowledges that the humanity of Christ was indeed ignorant of the final day.²⁰⁰ Cyril says that the humanity of Christ possesses all things that rightfully belong to it, sin being the only thing absent.²⁰¹ Ignorance of future events properly belongs to the limitations of humanity and so he does not repudiate the appearance of ignorance because it is an attribute of humanity. In the same way, the body received physical nourishment and rest to relieve his weariness. Just as hunger and weariness are attributes of humanity, so too is ignorance. In the following chapter we will discover the manner in which Cyril reconciles the complete humanity of Christ, along with all of its weaknesses and corruptibly, with the biblical and Nicene confession that Christ is true God, who performs miracles and offers salvation to humankind.

¹⁹⁶ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:98.³²⁻³⁵; PG 76:228B).

¹⁹⁷ Cf. *QUSC* (PG 75:1340A, 1341D); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:91.⁴³⁻⁴⁴; PG 76:209A).

¹⁹⁸ *Ep.* 45 (ACO 1.1.6:155.^{27-156.3}).

¹⁹⁹ *Answers to Tiberius* (W 154.⁷⁻¹⁰).

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.* (W 150.^{1ff}); *Thesaurus* (PG 75:368ff). Cf. Liébaert, *La Doctrine christologique*, 87-100.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.* (W 152.⁹⁻¹⁰).

CHAPTER EIGHT

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA'S PICTURE OF CHRIST

Thus far we have but built the foundation of our reconstruction of Cyril's picture of Christ. We have seen that Cyril maintains the Nicene paradox that Christ is completely God and completely human. Whereas in the previous two chapters, in our foundation-building stage, we were primarily descriptive, we now will become more analytical in our examination of Cyril's analogies. Previously, we wanted to discover what Cyril said about the soul of Christ and the condition of the Word in the Incarnation. About the former, Cyril acknowledged that a human soul was present in Christ, and indeed affirmed its required presence not only for a coherent picture of Emmanuel, but also for the salvation of the entire human being. About the latter, Cyril claimed that the Word remained God even once Incarnate, continuing to be *homoousios* with the Father, continuing to rule the universe, and continuing to be present throughout all his creation. Now we will explore how Cyril can hold together these two paradoxical statements about the person of Christ. What do his analogies tell us about his understanding of this person who is both God and human at the same time? As we will see, it is the answer to the previous question which enables us to see how human flesh can be life giving and how the impassible Word of God can suffer a human death. Our further examination of the analogies Cyril uses to illustrate the works of the Saviour will enable us to finish our reconstruction of Cyril's picture of Christ through a reading of his various analogies.

The place to begin is a recognition of the fantastic paradox with which Cyril was faced. Because of Scripture and Nicene faith, he was forced to conceive of the person of Christ as both *ἄνθρωπος* and *Θεός*. In addition, the person Jesus Christ was complete in both conditions. As difficult a dilemma as this is, it is compounded by the fact that this same person, the human being Jesus Christ, works divine miracles and offers life to the spiritually dead, works which only God can do. Furthermore, Cyril says not only that Christ suffered and died, but also that the Word experienced human sufferings and a human death on the cross. How can these things be?

We have examined two possible answers, both of which Cyril rejects. The first was to juxtapose the Word to an ordinary human

being. In this case, Christ is the subject of all the experiences, but God the Word knows only those things which are fitting for God—e.g., miracle working and giving life. On the other hand, the human person to whom he is joined knows the human experiences, such as hunger, thirst, suffering, and death. Cyril's primary reason for rejecting such a picture of Christ is its fundamental flaw with regard to the Word's knowledge of human experiences. If God did not live a human life and die a human death—in other words, become a human being (ἄνθρωπος)—then redemption was not accomplished. The Word must die as a human being in order to save as God. The second answer rejected by Cyril was to merge the Word and humanity in such a way as to make Christ a *tertium quid*. This meant either diminishing the Word, and making him into something passible and less than God, or removing the rational human soul from the humanity. The option of Christ being an in-between thing was abhorrent to Cyril. Christ must be *homoousios* with God and *homoousios* with humankind in order to be the saving mediator between them. The Word has not changed into a human being, though he has become one. Likewise, the human nature is complete. Cyril must find another way to answer the all-important christological question of how Christ can be fully God, yet experience ignorance, suffering, and death, and at the same time be fully human, yet perform divine deeds and offer salvation in himself. As we will presently see, Cyril's analogies hold the keys to how he answered this question.

In Chapter Six we found that Cyril conceived of Christ as ἄνθρωπος τέλειος. In Chapter Seven we discovered that this genuine human being, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, was also Θεός τέλειος. In addition, we saw that Cyril's explanation of how Christ was God and a human being lay in the description of Christ as God the Word become ἄνθρωπος. In other words, Christ is the Word, but the Word who has chosen voluntarily to live a human life and appropriate all of the limitations and laws of a human life to himself. This meant undergoing a human birth, experiencing the same needs as other human beings have [e.g., need for nourishment and rest], and ultimately dying in a human fashion. Now we come to three additional christological issues which Cyril illustrates. The first issue explains the paradox of how Christ can be one individual, though both God the Word and a human being. The other two issues address the questions which result from the confession of Christ being one individual; namely, how the corruptible flesh of Christ is miracle working and life giving, and how the impassible Word of God experiences human passions.

Various Interpretations of Cyril's Christology

It will be useful at this point to highlight some important insights into Cyril's christology made by various scholars. This is not an exhaustive summary of the history of Cyrillian research, but does provide us with the necessary context in which we can reconstruct the picture of Christ presented to us by the Alexandrian by means of his imagery.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, German Protestantism was concerned with the history of dogmatic theology. The profoundest instance of this is to be found in Harnack's *History of Dogma*.¹ In Harnack's view, the fact that Cyril understood the Incarnation as a mystery, a secret, led him [Cyril] to conclude that nothing else was necessary other than a definite statement of this secret.² In other words, the 'becoming human' of the Word of God was an inexpressible occasion, and simply to state its reality was sufficient. Harnack explains that this is why Cyril states his christology in polemical form alone. Faith, for Cyril, does not start from the historical Christ, but from the Logos.³ Harnack concludes that his christology is concerned only with the Logos. The Logos took humanity up to himself, without losing any of it, while himself remaining who he was, i.e., God. He has merely added something to himself. The Word endured everything that the human body and the human soul endured, because they are his body and soul. This humanity must be a genuine and complete humanity, because for Christ to be the Second Adam, and thereby be the Saviour of humankind, human beings must "belong to him [Christ] in a material sense as they did to the first Adam, and they do belong to Him materially only if he was not an individual man like Peter and Paul, but the real beginner of a new humanity".⁴ In addition, Harnack supposes that for Cyril it was important to conceive of two φύσεις before the Incarnation, but only one φύσις after the Incarnation. Harnack refers to this as a "perverse formula", and interprets it to mean that Cyril regarded the humanity as existing prior to the Incarnation, but being transferred to the substance of the Logos in the Incarnation. The natures are now distinguishable only

¹ A. von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. N. Buchanan, vv. I-VI (New York, 1961). Recent German scholarship is represented by A.M. Ritter, 'Der christologische Streit und das Dogma von Chalkedon (451)' in *Handbuch der Dogmen- und Theologiegeschichte*, esp. 242ff, and K. Beyschlag, *Grundriß der Dogmengeschichte* (Verlag, 1991), 63ff.

² *Ibid.*, vol. IV, 174.

³ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 177.

in thought, and not in reality. What belonged to the Logos became the property of the humanity and vice versa. Cyril was a monophysite “in so far as he taught that the Logos after the Incarnation continues to have as before one nature only; but as the opponent of Apollinaris [sic] he did not wish to mix the human nature with the divine in Christ”.⁵ Harnack concludes that the ἕνωσις φυσικὴ implies that it is impossible to reconcile the Christ of faith with the Christ of the Gospels, as Cyril’s picture of Christ “swallowed up what of the human remained in him”.⁶

The eminent scholar A. Grillmeier divides the christology of Cyril into two categories, that before the Nestorian Controversy and that which develops in and through the Nestorian Controversy.⁷ We have already seen Grillmeier’s interpretation of Cyril’s christology prior to the controversy: pure Logos-sarx. Grillmeier does not find in the early Cyril the physical union (*unio physica*) of the two natures, but the unity of Christ with both God and humankind.⁸ He concludes that Cyril reaches the final form of his picture of Christ by retaining some elements both from Athanasius and from Apollinarius.⁹ The developed christology of Cyril is interpreted as occupying a position between Apollinarius and Nestorius.¹⁰ This explains his two-fold tendency in christological idea and language. He considers Christ’s humanity to be a φύσις, but also emphasises one φύσις in Christ. Grillmeier sees this as contradictory. He understands the source of the contradiction to be Cyril’s concern after 428 only to express the unity of Christ, while attempting to distinguish notionally the divinity and humanity. Cyril’s fundamental problem is language.¹¹ In fact, Grillmeier states that Cyril roots the human nature of Christ in the divine reality of the Word, leading him [Grillmeier] to conclude that ultimately Cyril is speaking of a unity of person, even if he does not recognise it.¹²

In Durand’s contribution to the *Sources chrétiennes*, he concludes that Cyril seeks both to affirm the mystery of Christ and to refrain from relegating the Incarnation to a mere human conception.¹³ In other

⁵ *Ibid.*, 178.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 179.

⁷ Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition* (1975).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 417.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 415.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 480.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 482.

¹² *Ibid.*, 483.

¹³ G. M. de Durand, *Deux dialogues christologique, Source chrétiennes* v. 97 (Paris, 1964), 80ff.

words, Cyril confesses the reality of God becoming a human being, yet does not believe one can explain this mystery using human language; one only can point toward the reality of it. He finds Cyril wishing to address the christological problems facing the Church of the fifth century, but unable to break from the theological language of the past.

A further, albeit brief, examination of Cyril's christology is found in Pannenberg's *Jesus God and Man*. His analysis of Cyril's christology is found in a chapter on "The Impasse of the Doctrine of the Two Natures".¹⁴ Pannenberg's contention is that conceptions of the Incarnation as the unification of two substances, in this case God and humanity, are inadequate. What one must wrestle with is the question of God's union with the particular human life revealed in Jesus. He claims that Cyril believed Christ to be a single individual from two natures, which is different, he believes, from Chalcedon's "in two natures". He recognises with Apollinarius, that two complete things cannot be joined together and form a single whole. Therefore, he concludes, "the effort to conceive the unification of originally independent natures into a single individual in whom both natures remain distinct, leads to an impasse from which there is no escape".

Pannenberg classifies Cyril as a Logos-sarx theologian, following in the line of Athanasius and Apollinarius. He says that Cyril surpassed the christology of Athanasius by connecting the Logos and the sarx directly to one another. In addition, Cyril acknowledged that Christ possessed a rational human soul. Pannenberg is unable to affirm Grillmeier's conclusion that Cyril actually overcomes the dangers of a Logos-sarx christology, as even in a later letter Cyril says Christ's human nature was only a garment (see Ep. 45, 2). The greatest weakness Pannenberg finds in Cyril's christology is its insistence that the human nature possessed no *ὑπόστασις* of its own. Thus, the Word assumed only a human nature, and not an individual human being. For Pannenberg, Cyril's denial that the humanity of Christ was a distinct *ὑπόστασις* means that Christ could not be conceived of as a real, individual human being. Human nature without individuality is a mere abstraction. Therefore, Christ as an individual was never a human being, but was a superman, the Theanthropos.

In his article, "Questions on christology of Cyril of Alexandria", Dratsellas addresses the issue of the unity of the two natures—divinity and humanity—in Christ.¹⁵ Cyril was looking for a way both to ex-

¹⁴ W. Pannenberg, *Jesus: God and Man* (Philadelphia, 1977), 283-323.

¹⁵ C. Dratsellas, "Questions on christology of Cyril of Alexandria", *Abba Salama* 6 (1975), 214-217.

press the unity of the natures and, at the same time, preserve their distinctiveness. Cyril's inconsistent use of φύσις and ὑπόστασις cause some difficulty, but Dratsellas explains that they are both often used to express truth or reality in being.¹⁶ He says that the Incarnation, for Cyril, is not the change of the Logos into a new being, but the addition of something new to the eternal being of the Word. Having taken up for himself human nature, and having become in the form of a servant, he is now Theanthropos, the incorporeal Word of God become enfleshed. Dratsellas recognises that after the Incarnation, Cyril does not separate the Logos from the humanity, as this would destroy the *mysterium Christi*. The natures were truly united, and thus Christ is one individual. There is no juxtaposition of the Word and another human being. Instead, the human being Jesus Christ exists only in that the Logos has become this human being. The human nature had never a separate hypostasis or person, but the Logos, without changing into flesh, united flesh hypostatically to himself and became a human being. Dratsellas interprets Cyril's christology as being based on two poles: (1) Christ is the eternal Logos of God and (2) Christ is the historical person Jesus, the Incarnate Logos, who died for the salvation of humankind. If Christ were not fully human and fully God, then humanity could not be saved.

In question six, Dratsellas discusses the idea of the 'enhypostasis', by which he understands Cyril to explain the fact that Christ's humanity was complete, yet not an individual existent.¹⁷ The term is used by Cyril to speak of a real nature which exists only in and by something else. The human nature, though complete, is not a hypostasis by itself; that is, it is not a separate individual. Consequently, the human body of Christ was the own body of the Word.

A final interpretation can be found in McGuckin's work, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*.¹⁸ He concludes that it is Christ's role as mediator between God and humanity which gives his conception of the Incarnation credibility. Otherwise, it would be pointless, even offensive.¹⁹ Consequently, the Incarnation is entirely a gracious act of God for the redemption of humankind. He states that

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 214 n. 1.

¹⁷ The term 'enhypostasis' is never used by Cyril, but Dratsellas believes he holds this idea.

¹⁸ In an introduction to his translations of the correspondence between Severus of Antioch and Sergius the Monophysite (*Christology after Chalcedon*), I.R. Torrance examines what he terms the Cyrillian-Severian picture of Christ. The author wishes to express his indebtedness to Torrance for some of the language he uses in describing this construct.

¹⁹ McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 184.

"Cyril's originality lay in his demonstration that the concept of Christ's union of two states did not necessarily connote the destructive absorption of its constituent parts, but at its best signified the enhancement of individual elements within the union and precisely because of their mutual involvement".²⁰ McGuckin suggests that Cyril took for granted the fact that the two united natures were intact and distinct, but that the important element of christology was not to defend the obvious distinctness of the natures, but to attempt to express their intimate unity.²¹ It is this idea of a hypostatic union which is central to Cyril's christology. McGuckin explains that Cyril uses hypostasis to mean individual reality. Thus, when he speaks of the hypostatic union he means both that there is but one subject of the Incarnation—the Word Incarnate—and that the union is real and true.²² It is in Cyril's understanding and use of hypostasis that McGuckin finds his picture of Cyril's christology.²³ A hypostasis is a 'rounded-off' physis; in other words, a cat φύσις with a cat ὑπόστασις becomes a real cat. A cat φύσις cannot be realised by a human ὑπόστασις, for example. However, in the Incarnation, it is possible for the Word, whose divine φύσις does not limit him, to fashion within the Virgin a human form for himself. In this instance, the human φύσις was not a human ὑπόστασις on its own, but only is the creative act of the Logos. Therefore, the human nature was 'hypostatised' by the Logos of God. The charges against Cyril that he believed Christ's humanity to be non-hypostatic, or generic, are unfounded, in McGuckin's interpretation. For him, Cyril's point was to express a fully hypostatised human life, which was indeed "individual, and concrete, and real in the fullest possible sense, precisely because it was hypostatised by the Logos himself".²⁴

One can see from this brief overview the wide divergence of opinion with regard to Cyril's picture of Christ. The fact that no work has sought to construct a picture of Cyril's christology through his images, coupled with the great differences in interpretation among scholars, behoves us to re-examine the material afresh, particularly in the light of what we have seen about Cyril's analogies, and draw conclusions therefrom.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 195-196.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 207.

²² *Ibid.*, 212.

²³ *Ibid.*, 215.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 216.

Analogies in which Cyril Illustrated the Union of the Word and Humanity

If we are to understand better Cyril's own conception of the union of divinity and humanity in Christ, we need to examine those analogies which he employs in the service of illustrating his description of that union. We will recall that he uses these images not to analyse or to describe the Incarnation, but to clarify some particular component of it, which he has already described in his various descriptive formulae. In examining these analogies, we will be looking for that christological component, and for the mileage Cyril believes he gets from each image. Our intention in this section is to discover, as best we can, what he was trying to illustrate by means of his Scriptural and philosophical images.

Body-soul

The first analogy we will examine is Cyril's favourite—the union of body and soul in a human being. Many scholars in many places have discussed this image. Wiles recognises that “analogies drawn from what it is to be a man run the risk, when applied to the person of Christ, of being treated no longer as analogies, but as descriptions”.²⁵ Still, though, the Fathers—Cyril included—used the body-soul image frequently. In fact, as Wiles notices, it is the only analogy found in the Athanasian Creed.²⁶ Part of its usefulness, Wiles believes, is that its obvious paradoxical character is made somewhat intelligible by the fact that being a human being is directly, and thus intimately experienced.²⁷ Young, in her article, “A Reconsideration of Alexandrian Christology”,²⁸ recognises that if Apollinarianism is regarded as an extreme form of Alexandrian christology, then this must be seen as a dangerous analogy.²⁹ It is dangerous, because it can be interpreted as implying that the Logos replaced the human soul of Christ. She then gives three reasons why criticism of Cyril's use of the soul-body analogy is unfair. First, she cites Cyril's own recognition of the limits of analogies; they serve to point the mind to a reality, rather than to explain it.³⁰ Second, in addition to the Alexandrians, the Antio-

²⁵ M. Wiles, ‘The nature of the early debate about Christ's human soul’, *JEH* 16 (1965), 264.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 265.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 266.

²⁸ Young, ‘A Reconsideration’.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 105.

³⁰ Cf. QUSC (PG 75:1357C).

chenes, Chalcedonians, and Augustine employed the analogy. Third, the analogy was used only to say that the union of God and humanity was intimate, yet did not admit of any separation. She says that the image does not seek to describe the relationship, only to illustrate it. Norris states that "if the soul-body analogy is referred to not to establish the manner of the 'composition' of the God-man, but rather to intimate that as the soul is the single principle of life in the human animal so the Logos is the one 'subject' in Christ, then this metaphor can subserve the aim of Cyril's exposition".³¹ Wolfson interprets Cyril to use the body-soul analogy in order to describe the Incarnation as a union of "predominance", in which the Word is a person, and the humanity is only a nature.³² McGuckin believes that Cyril senses the body-soul analogy "to be a spiritually dynamic type of a profoundly spiritual mystery, and one that has its end result in the gift of life".³³ In McGuckin's interpretation, the image illustrated for Cyril how two realities can be joined together without destroying the integrity of either.³⁴ These two elements are united, and by the interpenetration, he says, they produce a single reality. However, the elements continue in a discrete existence. He concludes that in this analogy Cyril finds the ability to illustrate an important christological point: a union of two discrete natures can be understood to effect a "new condition and new possibilities". In addition, the integrity of the constituent elements is not compromised by the union. This means that divinity and humanity, though different natures, could come together in union to produce a new condition: God-enfleshed-in-history.³⁵ Neither the humanity nor the divinity is damaged or diminished by this union. This 'new condition' does not mean that Christ is a *tertium quid*, neither fully God nor fully human, but that he is God who became a human being, and thus enhanced human nature by means of the union.³⁶

If we now turn to instances of Cyril's use of the body-soul analogy, we can begin to discern why he used it, and what he intends to illustrate with it. Scripture says that the Word of God became flesh (γενεήσθαι σάρξ), which means he was united (ένωθῆναι) to flesh which possessed a rational human soul.³⁷ The Word of God is the

³¹ Norris, 'Christological Models'.

³² Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 408-409.

³³ McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 198.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 199.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 200.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 201.

³⁷ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:13.³²⁻³³; PG 77:17C).

Lord Jesus Christ, as confessed by Nicaea. One might recall, he says, that the name Christ has been applied to many in Scripture. How, then, is Emmanuel different from them? Although many have been anointed, and thus called Christ, the Word become flesh is the only Christ who is truly God (Θεός ἀληθώς).³⁸ Though the Word is begotten from the *ousia* of the Father and has eternally existed along with him, he has become flesh. This means that he was united to flesh with a rational human soul and has been born of the Virgin in a human fashion.³⁹ His birth is similar to our birth, Cyril says. The mother has the flesh in her womb, and God ineffably completes the human form by endowing the flesh with a rational human soul.⁴⁰ Even though the mother produces only the flesh, she give birth to the entire individual, both body and soul, and not just the body. The soul of a human being is made along with the body, and is conceived of as one with it, although the two are of different *ousiai*. Consequently, the mother gives birth to one individual who is comprised of two different things which together form one human being. In this real union (ἐνότητι ψυχικήν), the soul and the body remain intact and share their properties with one another.⁴¹ Cyril uses this analogy to illustrate the birth of Christ, and why Mary is Θεοτόκος. It is not nonsense to confess that the Word of God the Father was born from the Virgin according to the flesh. Just as with other human beings, only the flesh is provided by the woman, so too with Christ. Mary, the mother of Jesus, provided only the flesh, and God endowed it with a rational human soul. To this body the Word was ineffably united, and subsequently born from the Virgin. Therefore, Christ is God and Mary is Mother of God. Cyril recognises that the Word is different from (ἕτερος) both the flesh and the rational human soul.⁴² Perhaps, Cyril intends by this to defend himself against the accusation that the Word replaced the soul in Christ. In addition, he could mean by it that the Word is not a created substance, like a human body or soul. In either case, the effect is that Cyril's analogy must not be taken beyond its intended boundaries. He is using this image to illustrate his christological statement that Emmanuel is one individual. He is God the Word become a human being by means of a true human birth. Consequently, just as the mother of any ordinary human being provides only the flesh, but gives birth to the entire individual, so too does Mary provide only

³⁸ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:14.³⁵; PG 77:20D).

³⁹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:15.¹¹⁻¹²; PG 77:21A).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:15.¹³⁻¹⁵; PG 77:21B).

⁴¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:15.³²⁻³³; PG 77:21D).

⁴² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:15.¹⁷⁻¹⁸; PG 77:21B).

the flesh, but gives birth to the Word united to the flesh, making her Θεοτόκος.

Cyril's third anathema condemns those who divide the hypostases (ὑποστάσεις) of the one Christ after the union rather than confessing a true union (ἔνωσις φυσική).⁴³ In defending this anathema, Cyril says that the Word of God was united ineffably to a body which possessed a rational human soul.⁴⁴ It is by this union that we understand Christ to be one individual, rather than two. The union of body and soul in a human being illustrates this union of the Word and the body. The soul and body are of different *ousiai*, but together they are one living entity. So too Emmanuel is one individual, though a composite of the Word and the flesh. He is God, but he is God become flesh (σαρκωθέντα) and become a human being (ἐνανθρωπήσαντα).⁴⁵ The intangible and invisible Word of God has become tangible and visible by means of his union with the body.

Cyril claims that Nestorius teaches Emmanuel to be a God-bearing human being (Θεοφόρος) rather than truly God (Θεός ἀληθώς).⁴⁶ Christ is nothing more than the Word connected to (συννημμένον) an ordinary human being through equal title and authority. This is something different than the faith of the Fathers, who confessed that the Word of the Father became Incarnate and became a human being. He took for himself a body from the Virgin and was born in a human fashion. Therefore, Jesus Christ is one individual, both fully divine and fully human. Nestorius, though, divides the natures (φύσεις) and keeps them separate from one another, not believing that they really (ἀληθώς) came together.⁴⁷ It is obvious, Cyril maintains, that the Word of God has become a human being, not by juxtaposition (συνάφεια), which is an external relationship (σχετική), but by means of a true union (ἔνωσις ἀληθή), which is ineffable and beyond understanding.⁴⁸ Because of this true union, there is one nature (μία φύσις) of the Incarnate Word. This phenomenon can be illustrated with the analogy of an ordinary human being, who is only one individual, but is a compound of two things, soul and body.⁴⁹ This analogy is not to imply, Cyril says, that the Word replaced the rational human soul of Christ, for the body of Christ did indeed

⁴³ *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:40.²⁸⁻³⁰; PG 77:120C).

⁴⁴ *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:18.²⁶⁻²⁷; PG 76:300C).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.5:19.⁷⁻⁹; PG 76:300D).

⁴⁶ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:32.²⁴⁻²⁵; PG 76:60A).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:32.³⁸⁻³⁹; PG 76:60C).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:33.³⁻⁵; PG 76:60D).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:33.⁸⁻⁹; PG 76:61A).

possess a soul. In addition, the Word and the flesh are different in their being, and remain distinguishable even in the union. However, Christ is one individual out of (ἐξ) both of these things, as the divinity and the humanity have come together in a true union (ἐνωσις ἀληθινή).⁵⁰ Cyril says that Christ is not a juxtaposition of the Word and an ordinary human being, but he is a union of the Word and his own [the Word's] flesh. Just as a human being is a compound of body and soul, so too is Christ a compound of divinity and humanity.

In another passage Cyril records Nestorius' statement that although there is no separation of the authority or rank of Christ, or of his sonship, there is a separation of the divinity and the humanity. Though Christ is indivisible, he is two-fold with regard to his nature.⁵¹ Cyril interprets this as meaning that the Word was juxtaposed to an ordinary human being, and denying that the Word made the body taken from the Virgin his own, and has been truly united (ἀληθῶς ἠνωθῆναι) to flesh with a rational human soul.⁵² Therefore, Christ is not two-fold, but is one individual by means of the union. If one were to kill a human being, Cyril reasons, he would not be guilty of two murders, although a human being is a body and a soul.⁵³ This is how we can conceive of Christ; he is one individual, the Word of the Father with his σῶμα. The union does not abolish the difference between the natures, but does not keep them separate. Just as a human being is one individual, so too is Christ.

Another instance of Cyril's use of the body-soul analogy is found in his response to Nestorius' claim that God is in that which is taken up. Therefore, the assumed is co-named God because it is connected with (συναφθεῖς) God.⁵⁴ Cyril first acknowledges that the Word was not born from flesh, for flesh is born of flesh. However, the flesh which was born of Mary was the Word's own flesh, and he was one with it. An illustration which helps one to understand how the Word is one with his own flesh is how the soul of a human being is one with his own body.⁵⁵ The body is not by itself the individual, and neither is the soul. Rather, it is the body of the human being, and the soul of the human being. No one would separate the soul and the body and say that one is co-named with the other to signify one human being. Instead, a human being is the true union (ἐνωσις φυσική) of body and

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:33.¹³⁻¹⁴; PG 76:61A).

⁵¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:42.¹⁻⁶; PG 76:84B) (=Loofs 280.^{17-281.9}).

⁵² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:42.¹⁵⁻¹⁸; PG 76:84C).

⁵³ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:42.²⁷⁻³⁰; PG 76:85A).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:51.³⁻⁸; PG 76:105C) (=Loofs 262.⁷⁻¹²).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:51.¹⁴⁻¹⁵; PG 76:105D).

soul.⁵⁶ In other words, a human individual is not a soul which has a body, nor a body which has a soul. Rather, he *is* a soul and body. There is no human being without both components. So too, there is no Emmanuel without the Word and his complete human body.

One additional instance of Cyril's use of the body-soul image in his treatise *Adversus Nestorium* is found in response to another statement by Nestorius that the natures (φύσεις) in Christ remain separate.⁵⁷ Cyril says that Scripture teaches one Lord Jesus Christ, not separating the seed of Abraham from the Word of God. He acknowledges that the divinity is one thing, and the humanity is another, in terms of their inherent nature, but that Christ is one individual from them both by means of their true union (ἔνωσις ἀληθῆ).⁵⁸ But if the hypostases (ὑπόστασεις) are severed and kept apart, Cyril says, then Christ is not one individual, but two. There can only be one individual if one is the own (ἴδιον) of the other.⁵⁹ An illustration of this is that the body of a human being is conceived of as the own (ἴδιον) of the soul, though they are of different natures. This illustrates how Emmanuel is one individual. In the same way, the body of Christ has become the Word of God's own body by means of the true union (ἔνωσις ἀληθῆ).⁶⁰ In other words, the soul of a human being is that which guides and controls the body, and is therefore perceived to be the owner of it. In Christ, the Word guides and controls his own human body, which has a rational soul. If the Logos does not have ownership of the flesh in the same way that the soul has ownership of the body, then Emmanuel is not one individual, but two.

The orthodox conception of Christ, according to Cyril, is that the Word of God is united ineffably to flesh endowed with a rational human soul, and there is consequently one Son, Christ, and Lord. Emmanuel is both things, both God and a human being.⁶¹ The Word did not fashion a body from his own nature, but took it from the Virgin. The manner of his becoming a human being was that the two natures have come together in an ineffable union (ἔνωσις), making the flesh that of the Word. It does not damage the union to say that Christ is out of two natures (ἐκ δύο φύσεων), but in the union, the natures are not separated from one another. In other words, there is one Incarnate nature of the Word (μία φύσις τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:51²¹⁻²²; PG 76:108A).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:72³⁴⁻³⁷; PG 76:160C) (=Loofs 354.¹²⁻¹⁸).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:73²⁻⁴; PG 76:160D).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:73⁶; PG 76:160D).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:73¹¹⁻¹⁴; PG 76:161A).

⁶¹ *Ep.* 45 (ACO 1.1.7:153⁷⁻¹⁰; PG 77:232B).

σεσαρκωμένη).⁶² Therefore, conceptually one may consider that there are two natures that are united, but there is only one Christ, who is the Word of God become a human being. An illustration (παράδειγμα) of this is the way in which human beings are made up.⁶³ A human being is composed of two different natures, body and soul, yet is one individual from the union. Although there are two natures which constitute a human being, that person is not conceived of as two, but one. Emmanuel is one individual being, in which divinity and humanity exist in an indivisible union. A human being *is* both body and soul, Christ *is* both God and human.

The statement had been made that if there was one Incarnate nature of the Word (μία φύσις τοῦ Λόγου σεσαρκωμένη), then a mixture of the natures had occurred, which meant the diminishing of the human nature of Christ.⁶⁴ This is a twisting of the facts. God the Word was born of the Virgin and he is one with his flesh with a soul. Thus, there is one Christ. But this is not a mixture of the natures. Although both the Word and the flesh retain their own specific characteristics, they are nonetheless ineffably united (ἐνωθείς). Because of this union, Christ is one individual.⁶⁵ The word 'one' does not only refer to those things which are single elements, but also to those things which are compounded and exist in a synthesis (σύνθεσις). An example of such a case is a human being, who is a compound of body and soul. Body and soul are not *homoousios* with one another, but when existing in a union with one another, they constitute the single nature of a human being.⁶⁶ In other words, Cyril explains that Christ can be both completely God and a complete human being without either being diminished. To illustrate this claim, he refers to a human being, who is both complete soul and complete body without either being damaged. In fact, were it not for the union of body and soul there would be no human being; in the same way, if it were not for the true union of God and flesh there would be no Christ. Cyril's christological point in this instance is that Christ is one from two in the same way that a human being is one from two.

Later in the same letter Cyril employs the body-soul analogy once again.⁶⁷ He says that one can recognise in a human being two natures, that of the soul and that of the body. However, the distinction

⁶² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.7:153.²³; PG 77:232D).

⁶³ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.7:154.^{3ff}; PG 77:233A).

⁶⁴ *Ep.* 46 (ACO 1.1.7:159.⁹⁻¹⁰; PG 77:241A).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.7:160.¹⁻²; PG 77:241B).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.7:160.⁵⁻⁶; PG 77:241C).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.7:162.^{4ff}; PG 77:245A-C).

is affirmed only conceptually; they are not separated or severed from one another. Rather, they both belong to one individual. The two natures are no longer to be conceived of as two, but they together form the complete human being. Though Emmanuel possesses both a divine and a human nature, the Word has come into ownership of the humanity, and the two together constitute one Son.⁶⁸ Nestorius, however, severs the Word from the humanity, making Christ two individuals, rather than one: the Word of God become a human being. When Nestorius says that the natures exist together inseparably, he means that they have the same title and authority. This is not the same thing as saying they exist in an inseparable union whereby Christ is one individual. Once again, Cyril's point is that the Word has become a human being by means of a union of flesh with a rational human soul, which means that Emmanuel is one individual, and therefore possesses one nature (μία φύσις).

In his *Scholia de Incarnatione*, Cyril sets out to explain his christology by addressing various elements of it. In one paragraph he describes what he believes the union of the Word with our humanity to be.⁶⁹ He first says that it is not a technical union, such as παράθεσις, μίξις, or κράσις. Rather, it is ineffable and known only to God. However, the union of body and soul to constitute a human being illustrates the union of God and humanity in Christ. A human being's body is of a different nature from his soul, but still there is but one individual from both. Likewise, from the complete Word of God and complete humanity, there is one Christ, who is both God and human at the same time. One must conceive of Emmanuel as one individual who is the composite of God the Word and human flesh with a soul.

The final instance of Cyril's use of the body-soul analogy to illustrate that Christ is one individual is found in the christological treatise, *Quod Unus sit Christus*. He states that one must not divide the one Emmanuel into an ordinary human being and God the Word.⁷⁰ This would make him two individuals rather than one. Christ is the Word of God Incarnate. The one individual is both God and human, because he is God become a human being (ἄνθρωπος). However, the Word is not *homousios* with his body, because divinity and humanity are different natures.⁷¹ A union is not of one thing with itself, but of two or more things. In Christ, the two things were divinity and humanity. They are not severed from one another, but exist together in

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.7:162.⁹⁻¹¹; PG 77:245C).

⁶⁹ *Scholia* (PG 75:1376C).

⁷⁰ *QUSC* (PG 75:1289B).

⁷¹ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1289C).

an indissoluble union. Moreover, they have not become mixed together to produce one nature, but the flesh remains flesh and the Word remains God.⁷² Although the Word himself has united to himself flesh with a rational human soul, and made it his own, he is still one individual, even when Incarnate. Divinity and humanity have come together in an ineffable union, resulting in Christ. Out of these two things there is one Christ because of the union.⁷³ An example of an ineffable union in which one individual is a compound of two things is a human being. An ἄνθρωπος is not a simple being, but is constituted from body and soul, two things which are different according to their own nature. No one severs the body from the soul, but recognises that a human being *is* both of them, and removing one from the system destroys the right understanding of a human being.⁷⁴

We have examined Cyril's use of the body-soul analogy to illustrate his description of Christ as one individual. We must take great care not to 'read into' this image more than is intended to be there. Cyril's consistent declaration that Christ possessed a human soul must be taken seriously. We cannot interpret the body-soul image as implying that the Word replaced the human soul of Christ, as Apollinarius had previously maintained. In fact, Cyril defends himself against this charge by, in the midst of using this analogy, explicitly denying that he means to construct a picture of Christ in which the human soul is absent. In each instance, we have seen that Cyril stated his christological description and then illustrated it with the body-soul image. His description is that Jesus Christ was God the Word Incarnate. The Logos became a human being by means of an ineffable union with human flesh (endowed with a rational human soul), which he took from the Virgin. To illustrate this, he draws upon the constitution of human beings, who are an ineffable union of body, taken from the mother, and soul, given by God. Neither the soul nor the body must be diminished in order to unite with the other. A human being is neither a soul with a body, nor a body with a soul, but *is* a body and a soul. Likewise, Christ *is* the ineffable union of divinity and humanity. In the same way that one conceives of a human being as one individual, though compounded from body and soul, one should also conceive of Christ as one individual (μία φύσις) from God the Word and humanity taken from Mary.

⁷² *Ibid.* (PG 75:1289D).

⁷³ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1292A).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1292B).

Live coal

A second analogy is that of the burning coal on Isaiah 6:6-7.⁷⁵ Young, Wiles, and Wolfson all interpret this analogy in the same way as they interpret the body-soul image. McGuckin states that Cyril uses this image to illustrate that Christ was indeed human, but was suffused with the divinity of the Word.⁷⁶ He [Cyril] is trying to highlight the infusion of the power of the Logos into the humanity, yet he recognises, McGuckin says, that fire ultimately destroys the wood or the coal. For this reason, Cyril does not develop the analogy.

Introducing his use of this image, Cyril says that he will illustrate the manner (τρόπος) of the union using types (τύποι) from Scripture. As we saw previously, this passage affords Cyril with a christological image because of a correlative statement between this passage and one found elsewhere about Christ. In this instance, it is that Christ cleanses from sin those whom he touches, just as the coal in Isaiah's vision purged the prophet from sin. One sees in the burning coal, as in an image (εἰκόν), that the Word of God the Father is united to humanity.⁷⁷ The fire enters the wood and takes hold of it, but does not cause it no longer to be wood. Rather, it changes it to the appearance and power of the fire. Consequently, the fire and the wood are considered to be one individual entity. This illustrates the union between God the Word and human flesh because even in the union the Word and the humanity remain what they are by nature, and have not been diminished. In addition, the flesh is made the property of the Word and he works through it.

This image is found also in the context of an argument we saw previously.⁷⁸ Cyril says that Scripture confirms (ἐμπεδοῖ) the confession that Christ is one individual out of (ἐξ) both the divinity and the humanity, which exist in true union with one another.⁷⁹ It does this using many illustrations (παράδειματα) to enable us more clearly to see the *mysterium Christi*. In this instance, Cyril makes an additional statement that links this passage to Christ: Jesus Christ is the spiritual coal placed upon the altar, offering the scent of incense to the Father.⁸⁰ Cyril says that Christ is compared (παρεικάζεται) to the coal because they are both from two unlike things which truly (κατὰ

⁷⁵ *Scholia* (PG 75:1377D).

⁷⁶ McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 197.

⁷⁷ *Scholia* (PG 75:1380A).

⁷⁸ See pp. 44-46.

⁷⁹ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:33.¹²⁻¹⁵; PG 76:61A).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:33.²²⁻²⁵; PG 76:61B).

ἀλήθειαν) have been joined together (συνδεῖσθαι) in a union (ἔνωσις).⁸¹ He says that the fire enters the word and transforms (μεταστοιχειῖ) it into its own glory (δόξα) and power (δύναμις), though it [the wood] remains wood. Cyril conceives of the coal as a union of fire and wood, in which the wood is not changed into something that it was not previously, but is made partaker of the glory and power of the fire. The christological principle which Cyril wishes to illustrate is concerned with the oneness of the burning coal. In other words, it is not the physical effects of fire on wood which are at the heart of the analogy, but the fact that a piece of burning coal is both fire and wood simultaneously, without the wood being destroyed.

The Brilliance and the Fragrance

Immediately following the analogy of the burning coal, Cyril illustrates the union with two additional images from Scripture. The first is the pearl of great price, and the second is the lily of the valleys.⁸² Cyril draws the link between Christ and the pearl because he [Christ] has the brightness of the Father in his own nature. The lily is a christological image because Christ gives off the spiritual fragrance of the Father. McGuckin interprets Cyril's use of these analogies as intended to describe how two notionally discernible things can be joined together "to make a singular subject referral evidently necessary".⁸³ In other words, in these images, McGuckin claims, Cyril is looking for analogies of inherent attributes. That is, he wants to demonstrate how two things combine into one reality. These two natures in the union act on one another so as to produce a visible function.⁸⁴

Turning to these images, Cyril says that both the pearl and the lily are comprised of two things, a body and something incorporeal which is innate to the pearl and the lily, respectively.⁸⁵ The body of the pearl is different than its brilliance, and the shaft of the lily is different than its fragrance. However, the pearl and the lily are neither the body nor the incorporeal item alone. The pearl is neither the gem nor the brilliance, but is a union of them both. Likewise, the lily is not the shaft of the flower nor the perfume it emits, but is a union of them both. This illustrates how one ought to conceive of

⁸¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:33.³²⁻³³, PG 76:61C).

⁸² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:33.^{35ff.}, PG 76:61Dff); citing Matthew 13:45-46 and Song of Songs 2:1, respectively.

⁸³ McGuckin, *The Christological Controversy*, 196.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁸⁵ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:33.^{41-34.1}, PG 76:61D-64A).

Emmanuel. Divinity and flesh are different natures, yet the two were inseparable in Christ, and the body is said to belong to the Word.⁸⁶ Therefore, just as a pearl is one item, though composed of both the body and the brilliance, and a flower is one item, though composed of the shaft and the perfume, so too is Christ one individual, though composed of God the Word and flesh.

The image of the flower and the perfume is also found in Cyril's *Scholia de Incarnatione*.⁸⁷ He says that the perfume of the flower is incorporeal (ἄσῳμάτος), and uses the shaft of the flower as its body. The flower, then, is conceived of as one item from the union of perfume and shaft. If either one is missing, there is no flower. The flower is the object, but it is composed of the smell and the shaft. This is how one ought to conceive of the divinity in Christ. It is by means of the union with the flesh that the incorporeal Word becomes corporeal. It is fitting to say that the Word is in his own body (σῶμα) in the same way that the perfume is said to be in the shaft, and together make up a lily.

What can we say about Cyril's christology in the light of these images? It appears that he is describing the Incarnation as a static event, simply a gluing together of two pieces of the christological puzzle. In this case, Cyril would be trying to explain the union in terms of the process in which two things become one. However, is this what he intends by these images? It must be remembered that Cyril uses analogies to illustrate a particular christological principle, and not to describe or explain the Incarnation. If we can highlight the point he wishes to make with each image, we can move closer to seeing what he intends to make more clear. In our examination of the first instance of the body-soul analogy, we saw that Cyril was trying to illustrate how the birth of Christ was similar to the birth of other human beings. He says that the mother, though contributing only the flesh to the event, still gave birth to the entire human being; that is, body and soul united in a natural union. In the same way, the Virgin gave birth to the Word united to his own flesh and soul. Underlying this is his insistence that the Word has become a human being by means of a union in which the flesh and soul become his. This is reiterated in each of the other instances of the body-soul analogy. Christ is one individual because of the union of the Word with his own body and soul in the same way that a human being is one individual because of the union of a human body and a human soul.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:34.¹⁻⁵; PG 77:64A).

⁸⁷ *Scholia* (PG 75:1380B).

It is asking too much of the analogy to make it a description of the Incarnation. In other words, Cyril is using the body-soul image as an analogy of what it means to be a composite individual, rather than what it means for God to become Incarnate.

Cyril uses each of the three other images examined in the section in the same way. The burning coal analogy from Isaiah serves to illustrate that the Word is from two unlike things which have truly been brought together into a union. This is not to imply that a pre-existent human being and the pre-existent Word of God were pieced together in the same way that one would place a coal into a fire. Once, again, Cyril is looking for a way to illustrate how one individual existent—Christ, the burning coal—is a composite unity of two things—Word-humanity, fire-coal. His christological point is not the manner in which the two are joined, but the fact that Christ is one individual, but that he is a union of both divinity and humanity. Similarly, with the images of the pearl and the lily, Cyril wishes to illustrate that Christ is one individual, though composed of God the Word and his own human body and soul.

How, though, is this different from a static union, or from Pannenberg's unification christology? The answer rests in Cyril's description, leading up to his insertion of these images into the flow of his argument. It will be remembered that we argued previously that Cyril's analogies are used to illustrate and clarify his christological predication. In other words, Cyril describes what he understands about a particular aspect of the Incarnation, and then employs an image(s) to clarify his point. If we look back at what he is saying before using these analogies, and examine the context in which they are used, we can see that he indeed is not teaching a static, event-based christology. That is, by ἕνωσις he does not mean that the Incarnation is a technical process by which two things are somehow joined to produce one thing. For example, in one of the instances of Cyril's use of the body-soul analogy, we saw that he rejected Nestorius' συνάφεια because it separated the Word from the body of Christ, thus resulting in two Christs. In contrast to Nestorius, Cyril then says that Jesus Christ is one individual, both God and human.⁸⁸ He then seeks to describe how this could be possible. Christ could be both divine and human only if God the Word himself became a human being. How does this happen? On the one hand, Nestorius answers, in Cyril's mind at least, that it occurred by means of an external juxtaposition (σχετική συνάφεια) of the Logos and a human

⁸⁸ Obviously a confession of *Deus vere, homo vere*.

being. On the other hand, Cyril maintains that it happened by means of an inexpressible true union (ἕνωσις ἀληθῆ). Because of this union, Christ is one individual (μία φύσις); that is, the Word of God Incarnate. Working backwards, we can see that Cyril's images of the union are designed to illustrate, not how the Word became a human being, but how the Word Incarnate can be understood to be one individual, who is himself both divine and human, rather than two individuals, one divine and one human.

This alone, however, does not give us the full story. We have seen in these analogies that Cyril wishes to illustrate that Christ is one individual who is both complete God and a complete human being. By the Word uniting to himself human flesh, he has not himself been diminished, neither has he destroyed the humanity. Yet, the ineffable union takes place only in that the Word has made the human body and soul *his own* body and soul, and thereby lived a complete and genuine human life. This means that there are two christological principles which are at stake. First, Cyril must maintain that Christ is one divine and human individual, who is complete God and a complete human being. This he does by means of his ineffable ἕνωσις. He illustrates this with numerous images. Second, as a result of this ἕνωσις, the Word possesses ownership of the body and soul. In the analogies we have seen thus far, Cyril illustrated this point by arguing that the soul possesses ownership of the body because it uses the body for its own purposes, as does the incorporeal perfume of the lily. Again, one should not read into these analogies more than is present. It should not be inferred that the body of Christ lacked a human soul, the incorporeal part of a human being, because of this claim. Cyril intends only to illustrate the fact that in uniting humanity to himself, the Word possesses ownership of it.

That the Word's ownership of the human body and soul, as illustrated in the previously examined analogies, is central to Cyril's picture of Christ can be seen in his christological description. Cyril confesses that Scripture does not teach that the Word united the πρόσωπον of a human being to himself, but that he became flesh (γέγονε σὰρξ).⁸⁹ He describes what becoming flesh means: that God the Word participated (μετέσχευ) in flesh and blood like ours, made the body like ours his own (ἴδιον), and proceeded from the Virgin as a human being (ἄνθρωπος).⁹⁰ Even in the flesh he remained fully God. Therefore, the Virgin is Θεοτόκος, not because the Godhead origi-

⁸⁹ *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:28.¹²⁻¹⁴; PG 77:48C).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:28.¹⁵⁻¹⁶; PG 77:48D).

nated with her, but because the body and soul of the Word was born from her. The Logos is said to have been born according to the flesh (κατὰ σάρκα) because he was hypostatically united (ἐνωθεὶς καθ' ὑπόστασιν) to the human body and soul.⁹¹ Cyril states that the Word has become one with his own flesh (γένονεν ἐν πρὸς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σάρκα), and has made it truly his own (ἀληθῶς ἰδίαν).⁹² In another place, he writes that the body has become his own (ἴδιον αὐτοῦ γέγονε τὸ σῶμα).⁹³

Cyril reasons that Scripture describes the Incarnation as the Word becoming σὰρξ in order to show the intensity of the true union (ἀληθὴ ἔνωσις), being recognised as hypostatic (καθ' ὑπόστασιν).⁹⁴ This means that the Word of God, *homoousios* and co-eternal with the Father, descended in a *kenosis* and took the form of a slave; that is, he became a human being like us. The means by which he did so, was a genuine human birth in which he made the flesh his own.⁹⁵ To say that the Word was hypostatically (καθ' ὑπόστασιν) united to the flesh means that the body which was united to him and was born from the Virgin is his own body, in the same way that other human beings possess ownership of their bodies.⁹⁶ Consequently, the body of Christ is the body of the Word, and does not belong to someone else. As we have seen before, a human being does not *have* a body, as though it were separate from him, but a human being *is* a union of body and soul. It is in this way that an human individual “owns” his body. In this same way, the Word Incarnate—Christ—does not *have* a body in the sense of possessing something which is foreign to him, but he *is* the union of the Logos and his own flesh. Therefore, he possesses direct ownership of the human body and soul, because they are his and none other's.

In another place, he states that the Word of God the Father did not descend into the flesh of some other human being, in which case the flesh would be owned by someone else and foreign to the Logos, as though he dwelled in a human being in the way in which he had dwelled in the prophets.⁹⁷ Rather, the Word has made the body from the Virgin his own body, and has been born according to the flesh. It

⁹¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:28.²⁰⁻²²; PG 77:48D); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:71.²³⁻²⁴; PG 76:157A).

⁹² *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:37.³⁰, 38.²⁻³; PG 77:113D, 116A).

⁹³ *Ep.* 46 (ACO 1.1.6:159.⁶; PG 77:240D).

⁹⁴ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:15.⁸⁻⁹; PG 76:16BC).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:15.²⁴⁻²⁸; PG 76:17A).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:16.^{41ff}; PG 76:20D).

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:18.¹⁻⁴; PG 76:24AB).

is his own birth, because the body which was born is his own body.⁹⁸ Thus, Christ is truly God (Θεός ἀληθῶς), and should not be divided into God and a separate human being; instead the Word of God the Father and the human being born from the Virgin are the same individual—the Logos become ἄνθρωπος.⁹⁹

Cyril addresses the issue of ownership in an interesting passage in which he accuses Nestorius with claiming Christ—the Word of God become flesh—is the owner of divinity (κτῆτωρ Θεότητος).¹⁰⁰ This serves only to sever the one Christ into two individuals, the Word and another human being, as it implies the Word coming into ownership of something which was not his previously. In addition, the Logos is God by nature, and cannot therefore be separated from his divinity. For example, no one would say that a human being is the owner of human nature; the two cannot be separated. Turning this around, Cyril asks if Nestorius means by this that divinity has become the possession (κτῆσις) of a human being, whereby that person became God by nature.¹⁰¹ Christ is not a human being who has become owner of a divine nature, for he could not thereby become God. On the contrary, God the Word took possession of the humanity. If someone comes into possession of wealth, Cyril argues, that person does not himself become the possession of the wealth which he now owns. He possesses it, it does not possess him.¹⁰² Cyril then describes clearly what he believes about the manner (τρόπος) of the Incarnation. It is not that a human being became possessor of the divine nature, as he interprets Nestorius' phrase "owner of the divinity" to mean. Rather, the Word who is God became owner of the seed of Abraham and became an ἄνθρωπος, taking on the form of a slave.¹⁰³ The Word has become a human being by taking possession of the human body and soul, and being born from the Virgin. In this way, one understands that the Word is owner of the humanity, and not that a human being is owner of the divinity.

This leads us one step further in reconstructing Cyril's christology as it is illustrated in these analogies. Along with the notion of union, which in itself appears static and even incoherent, we find the notion of ownership, in which the Word takes possession of the human nature, rather than a human being taking possession of the divinity. In

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:18.⁴⁻⁵, 15-16; PG 76:24BC).

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:18.¹⁸⁻²¹; PG 76:24D).

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:57.⁸⁻¹⁰; PG 76:121B) (=Loofs 233.4-7).

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:57.²⁵; PG 76:121C).

¹⁰² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:58.²⁻⁷; PG 76:124B).

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:58.¹⁰⁻¹¹; PG 76:124C).

other words, the Word has added to his own divine nature a new human nature taken from the Virgin, and not his divine nature being given to some ordinary human being. As a consequence of this addition, the Word now possesses not only a divine nature, which is his as God, but also a human nature, which is his as a human being. Therefore, rather than saying that Christ has two natures, Cyril prefers to say that the Word has two natures, his divinity and his humanity. We must now take into account the result of this union of possession which Cyril presents to us. As we will presently see, the actions and experiences of Christ are the key to reconstructing Cyril's picture of Christ. It is what the Incarnate Word does, and why, that give us the clearer picture of who Cyril believes he is.

What Cyril is contending with, is the seemingly paradoxical behaviour of Jesus Christ. He walks on water, but not always. He turns water into wine, but refuses the temptation to turn stones into bread. This does not appear to be consistent behaviour. Cyril's picture of Christ must take this into account, something which a static conception of the union does not do. This forces us to look more closely at his description of the union, and in particular at his explanation of the ability of Jesus Christ, a real and genuine human being, to perform miracles and to offer salvation through his own body and blood in the Eucharist. In addition to investigating Cyril's explanation of a human being who performs divine deeds, we will need to examine his claim that the impassible Word of God the Father experiences a human death for the redemption of humankind. Cyril illustrates his description of both of these phenomena with a number of analogies. We will now explore these images, and the picture they paint for us.

Analogies Concerning the Divine Actions of Jesus Christ

In Chapter Seven we saw Cyril's affirmation of the complete humanity of Christ. Christ is fully human, just like other human beings. He grows weary and in need of rest. He hungers and experiences grief and pain. He is ignorant of future events, and he grows in wisdom. In addition to saying that Christ's humanity is complete humanity, with all the attributes and weaknesses thereof, Cyril also insists that his humanity is divine. He quotes 1 Corinthians 15:49, "As we bear the image of the earthly, we shall bear the image too of the heavenly".¹⁰⁴ He interprets this as referring to Christ. Christ is called a heavenly

¹⁰⁴ *QUSC* (PG 75:1269C).

man, Cyril says, not because he brought down his flesh from heaven, but because the Word has become as we are; that is, ἄνθρωπος. Because the body of Christ belongs to the Word become a human being, it is proper to call it divine, just as one would call the body of a man human.¹⁰⁵ He also says, "We will not imagine, like some of the more primitive heretics, that the Word of God took from his own (that is, divine) nature and fashioned himself a body, but follow at every point the divine Scriptures in insisting that he took it from the holy Virgin".¹⁰⁶

Despite all of Cyril's assurances that Christ was indeed a complete human being (τέλειος ἄνθρωπος), he finds himself speaking of Christ in a paradoxical manner, which is interpreted by his Eastern opponents as heresy. He has acknowledged that the human life lived by Christ was the same as that of other human beings, with the sole exception that he was sinless. As an ἄνθρωπος Christ is subject to death, he hungers and thirsts, and he grows weary and in need of sleep. These are all human actions which Cyril rightly professes to be genuine experiences and weaknesses of Christ. There are other experiences of Christ, however, which do not properly belong to human beings. For example, the Bible records that Christ walked on water and turned water into wine. He fed thousands with a few loaves and fishes. These are not the actions of an ordinary man. Cyril states that Christ spoke both divinely (Θεοπρεπῶς) and humanly (ἄνθρωπινως), and performed both divine and human actions.¹⁰⁷

Cyril addresses the miracle-working power of Christ in his *Letter to the Monks*. He says that Emmanuel opened the eyes of the blind, restored hearing to the deaf, gave the lame the ability to walk, and the mute the ability to speak.¹⁰⁸ The Lord Jesus Christ possessed Godly power (ἰσχύς), authority (κυρεία), strength (ἐξουσία), and dominion (κυριότης), and was therefore able to work miracles.¹⁰⁹ Even though Christ is said to be an ἄνθρωπος and therefore σὰρξ, Cyril affirms that he did indeed perform miracles.¹¹⁰ He writes that there are some who deny that the σὰρξ of Christ contributed to the working of miracles. He rejects this, claiming instead that the same human

¹⁰⁵ *Ep.* 45 (ACO 1.1.6:156.⁵⁻⁶; PG 77:236B).

¹⁰⁶ *Ep.* 40 (ACO 1.1.4:26.³⁻⁶; PG 77:192D). Wickham's translation.

¹⁰⁷ *Answers to Tiberius* (W 154.¹⁸⁻²⁰).

¹⁰⁸ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:19.¹⁰⁻¹³; PG 77:29D).

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:19.²⁰⁻²¹; PG 77:32A). These terms are being used to imply roughly the same thing; that is, Christ possessed in him all the inherent authority and power of God.

¹¹⁰ *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:23.²²⁻²⁴, 22.¹⁵⁻¹⁶; PG 76:309A, 305D).

being who hungered, grew weary, and was crucified, also performed many miracles.¹¹¹ He says that the σῶμα of Christ was completely full of ability which is proper to God (ἐμπλεων τῆς Θεοπρεπούς ἐνεργείας).¹¹² In summary, Cyril claims that the same Christ was hungry, tired, anxious, experienced pain and death, while also performing divine miracles, calming seas, and raising the dead.¹¹³

A further display of divine power, much more difficult to reconcile with the claim that Christ was a complete human being, who lived a complete human life, is in the life-giving properties attributed to the humanity of Christ. Cyril anathematizes whoever does not confess that the σὰρξ of Christ is life giving (ζωοποιόν).¹¹⁴ He also says that the σῶμα of Christ is ζωοποιόν.¹¹⁵ The body and blood which are offered in the Eucharist are also said to be life giving.¹¹⁶ The flesh of Christ, which is normally subject to decay, is actually life giving.¹¹⁷ Christ is a complete and perfect human being who possesses the life-giving power of God. He experiences both those things properly attributed to God and those things properly attributed to human beings.¹¹⁸ We can here conclude, along with Cyril himself, that a question faces the theologian at this point: “How is the flesh of a human being life-giving in its own nature? (πῶς ἡ ἀνθρώπου σὰρξ ζωοποιὸς ἔσται κατὰ φύσιν τὴν ἑαυτῆς;)”¹¹⁹ After all, the ability to give life belongs to the arena of divine, rather than human, works.¹²⁰ We can find a number of analogies in which Cyril illustrates his understanding of how this complete and real human being can perform miracles and give life through his body and blood. We should examine them presently.

In a fragment against Theodore of Mopsuestia, Cyril says that because Christ is the Word become a human being, the body of Christ is the body of the Word. Because the Word is life giving, it necessarily follows that his body is life giving, and has thereby ascended beyond its natural abilities. The Logos has placed in his own body his power, so that it can heal the sick and raise the dead. Cyril

¹¹¹ *Answers to Tiberius* (W 154.1ff).

¹¹² *QUSC* (PG 75:1269B).

¹¹³ *Ep.* 45 (ACO 1.1.6:155.20-22; PG 77:236A).

¹¹⁴ *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:41.28ff; PG 77:121CD). See also *QUSC* (PG 75:1360A).

¹¹⁵ *QUSC* (PG 75:1269B); *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:25.2⁶; PG 76:312A).

¹¹⁶ *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.137.28-29; PG 77:113D); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:84.23ff, 91.1-5; PG 76:189Dff, 205D); *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:25.2-6; PG 76:312A).

¹¹⁷ *QUSC* (PG 75:1360D).

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:38.2; PG 77:116A).

¹²⁰ *QUSC* (PG 75:1353A).

then illustrates what he means by means of an analogy of a brass vessel or other matter being put to fire. When fire is in contact with a brass vessel, it is said to transelement it into its own might and working.¹²¹ We see much the same thing if we return to the analogy of the burning coal discussed earlier. Here Cyril says that the fire enters the wood and transforms it into its own glory and might, although it [the wood] remains wood. He also says that although the wood does not cease to be wood, it is transformed into the appearance of fire and is conceived of as one with it.

Cyril applies the analogy of fire's effects on other substances to his explanation of the life-giving Eucharist.¹²² Nestorius is recorded as having insisted that Jesus' statement that the one who eats his [Jesus'] flesh shall live is referring to the humanity of Christ and not to the Word.¹²³ Cyril responds that if this is so, then the Eucharist is mere cannibalism, and we partake of the flesh of an ordinary human being. However, the body in the Eucharist is not that of an ordinary human being, but the Word of God Incarnate.¹²⁴ It is the flesh which was united (ἐνωθεῖσθαι) to the Word that gives life and not the flesh of another human being. The flesh is made life giving by means of its being the own flesh of the Word, who himself possesses the power to give life. The way in which fire changes water illustrates how the Word made his own flesh life giving.¹²⁵ Cyril says that fire infuses its own natural power into substances with which it comes into contact. For example, when fire comes into contact with water, it transforms the naturally cold water into being hot. This illustrates how the Word of God, who is life by nature (κατὰ φύσιν), makes the flesh which is united to him life giving.¹²⁶ If you separate the Word from the body, then it is no longer life giving, as its ability to give life is a result of it being the body of the Logos. If the body belongs to another human being besides the Word become ἄνθρωπος, then the Eucharist is cannibalism. However, because God is owner of the flesh, and it has become his by means of the act of Incarnation, he uses his own flesh to give life.

In another place, Cyril sets out to expound John 1:14: the Word became σὰρξ. He says that in Christ a real and true union took place (*in Christo unitatem summam veramque factum*).¹²⁷ The Word dwells in

¹²¹ *Fragments against Theodore* (Pusey, 352).

¹²² *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:84.^{23ff}; PG 76:189Dff).

¹²³ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:83.^{41-84.1-6, 18-22}; PG 76:189A, C) (=Loofs 228.^{4-16, 355.13-18}).

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:84.²³⁻²⁵; PG 76:189D).

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:84.^{27ff}; PG 76:192A).

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:84.³¹⁻³²; PG 76:192A).

believers, but not in the same way as he is said to dwell in the body. In us, God's dwelling is external (σχετική), much as fire infuses its inherent heat into other things.¹²⁷ On the other hand, with Christ, the indwelling is through a true union (*per veram unitatem*).

In another place, Cyril says that if the flesh has not been made the own flesh of the Word, then it is not able to give life.¹²⁸ The flesh of an ordinary human being cannot save, only the body of the Word, who is Life. It is incorrect, Cyril says, to say that the body and blood from the Eucharist are those of some person connected to the Word, as no one besides God can provide salvation.¹²⁹ Flesh is unable to give life on its own, as it is itself corruptible; it can only be made life giving if it belongs to the Word of God, who gives life to all things. When the Logos becomes a human being and makes the body his own, he infuses into the body the ability to give life. He then illustrates this by saying that when something which is naturally cold is placed in fire, the fire makes it warm by infusing it with its own power.¹³⁰ Likewise, the Word of God infused his own flesh with his own life-giving power without being confused with the flesh or changing.

From this investigation, we can see how Cyril imagined that the humanity of Christ participated in the working of miracles, and is life giving to those who receive it. As we have seen, Cyril affirmed Christ to be fully God, because he was the Word become a human being. Christ possesses the power of God because he is God. In his anathema against those who say that the power to perform miracles and cast out demons came from a Spirit which was alien to Christ, Cyril says that when the Word became a human being, he remained God, possessing all the Father had, except the title Father.¹³¹ Therefore, the Word Incarnate has as his own (ἴδιον) the Holy Spirit, who has the power to perform divine works. Christ, the Word Incarnate, accomplishes miracles and other divine signs in his own power, and not a power which is alien to him. It is, then, not proper to say that Jesus was merely a human being endowed with the power of God because of his συνάφεια with God the Word.¹³² This would imply two differ-

¹²⁷ *Scholia* (PG 75:1398AB). Extant only in Latin.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* The Greek is retained in the Latin translation.

¹²⁹ *QUSC* (PG 75:1360A).

¹³⁰ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1360B).

¹³¹ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1361A).

¹³² *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:23.²⁰⁻²⁷; PG 76:308D-309A). Cf. *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:41.¹⁷⁻²⁰; PG 77:121B).

¹³³ Cf. *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:41.¹¹⁻¹²; PG 77:121A).

ent Christs, one who empowers and one who is empowered.¹³⁴ In actuality, however, there is only one Christ, who is none other than God the Word Incarnate. Because the Logos naturally possesses his own Holy Spirit, when he becomes a human being, he still works by means of the power of his Spirit; it is his own power. Those who say that the power of the Word does not belong to Christ deny that the Word is Christ, and are anathematised. There are some, Cyril asserts, who claim that Christ's flesh did not contribute anything to the working of miracles.¹³⁵ These say that God the Word raised Lazarus from the dead, and the human being Jesus was the one who grew weary and hungry, and was crucified. They miss the truth, however. There are not two Christs or Sons of God, but only one, the Word become a human being. All the sayings and actions of Christ belong to this one individual: the Word of God Incarnate.¹³⁶ The miracles performed by the human being Jesus Christ do not belong to the Logos *qua* Logos alone, but to the Logos in the economy, as he is the Word become ἄνθρωπος. The flesh of Christ is the flesh of the Word, and is therefore participant in all his actions and experiences.¹³⁷ Cyril illustrates this with the image of a carpenter or a smith.¹³⁸ The acts of a carpenter are performed by the soul using the body as its instrument. However, no one says that the work of the carpenter is that only of the soul, although it is the soul which empowers the body and moves it to action. Rather, one says that the work belongs to the soul and the body as a unit, as a human being is the ineffable union of them. This illustrates how Christ performs divine signs. Before becoming a human being, the Word performed his divine actions by means of himself (καθ' ἑαυτοῦ). Once Incarnate, however, the Word works his miracles through his own flesh (διὰ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ σαρκός). Cyril then reminds the reader that the Incarnate Logos healed one blind man by reaching out and touching him, and another by placing clay formed from dust and saliva on his eyes. Consequently, one understands that the Word of God worked miracles through the flesh. As with the other analogies we have seen, one must take care not to infer from this one that the Word replaced the human soul in Christ. Instead, one sees in it that just as the soul is that which moves the body to

¹³⁴ *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:22.⁵⁻²⁰; PG 76:305CD).

¹³⁵ *Answers to Tiberius* (W 154.^{1ff}).

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* (W 154.¹⁸⁻²⁰).

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* (W 162.³⁻¹⁷).

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* (W 152.^{17ff}).

action, and therefore uses the body as its instrument, so too did the Word use his own human body to perform miracles.

If we return to the analogy of the burning coal, we are able to discover more about Cyril's conception of the person and work of Christ. In the image of the coal, one can see the Word of God united to the humanity (ἐνωθέντα μὲν τῇ ἀνθρωπότητι).¹³⁹ Both the Logos and the humanity united to him remain intact, neither one being diminished or changed. However, Cyril says that the Word transelements (μεταστοιχειώσαντι) what he had united to himself, or taken up, into his own glory (δόξα), power (δύναμις), and might (ἐνέργεια). The image of the fire and wood is applicable, Cyril maintains, because the fire infuses the wood, but does not change the wood into something else. Rather, it transelements (μεταστοιχειῖ) the wood into its own glory (δόξα) and power (δύναμις). The Logos, Cyril says, similarly infuses the humanity with the might (ἐνέργεια) of his own nature.¹⁴⁰ Therefore, while there is no change in the humanity, there is a transelementing of it into something better than it was previously. By means of the union with the Word of God, in which the Word takes human nature as his own and endows it with his own glory, power, and might, the human body and soul of Christ are used by the Word to perform deeds reserved only for God (τὰ Θεοπρεπῆ). We are now beginning to get a clear picture of Cyril's christology. The humanity taken up by the Logos in the Incarnation, albeit genuine and complete humanity, has been transformed into something greater and better than usual, and has thereby been endowed with the ability not only to perform miracles such as restoring sight to the blind, but also to give spiritual life.

But this transelementing of the humanity assumed by the Word was not for the sake of Christ alone, but also for all humankind. There was a soteriological reason for the transelementing, which makes the seemingly incoherent act of union sensible. Cyril says that the Word voluntarily condescended to the measures of humanity, transferring (μεταθεῖς) what is ours to himself, so that we might abide in him.¹⁴¹ The Word's becoming flesh has served to conquer death and the sinfulness of humankind. Because the Word has ineffably united the human body to himself, it has become his own body.¹⁴² Consequently, the Word has endowed it with his properties

¹³⁹ *Scholia* (PG 75:1380A); *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:33.17ff; PG 76:61BC).

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1380B).

¹⁴¹ *QU/SC* (PG 75:1268C).

¹⁴² *Ibid.* (PG 75:1269B).

(ιδιότητα), rendering it holy, life giving, and full of ability reserved for God. The only way a human body could give life would be for it to belong to the one who is life and life giving by nature; that is, the Logos of God. It is, then, through his ownership of the body that he endows it with the ability to perform miracles and give life. In this transelementing of the assumed humanity, Cyril says, we are also transelemented (μεταστοιχειώμεθα) and thereby made superior to sin and corruption.¹⁴³ As a consequence, we are no longer referred to as children of the flesh (σάρξ), but have been transelemented into something superior to our nature as human beings, and are thereby called children of God by grace. The one who is Son of God by nature (κατὰ φύσιν) and truly (ἀληθῶς) has become a human being like us so that we might become children of God by his grace.¹⁴⁴ In other words, by transelementing what he assumed, he transelements us from human things to those things that are his own.¹⁴⁵ The Word is able to accomplish this purpose only if he has become flesh (σάρξ), that is, a human being (ἄνθρωπος).¹⁴⁶ In becoming a human being, the Word has made the human body his own by means of an inseverable union. It is therefore his body and not that of someone else. By assuming the human nature and uniting it to himself, he transelements it, and thereby transelements our nature. By making the flesh his own, he has destroyed its corruptibility and endowed it with his own life-giving properties.¹⁴⁷ Giving life is a property and work of God, and not of humanity.¹⁴⁸ For Christ to offer spiritual life to humankind, his flesh needed to be transelemented to a new, incorruptible life. This was accomplished by means of the Word's union with the flesh in which it became his own, and therefore possessed his power. Consequently, the flesh which belongs to the Word Incarnate has been made incorruptible, by virtue of the fact that it is his. He gives life to us, making us incorruptible as well, by participating in flesh and blood with us.¹⁴⁹

As we have seen, Cyril recognises that the body of Christ could not possibly give life if it were the body of a mere human being. In addition, the human flesh was in need of transelementing, which occurred in its union with the Word of God. For Cyril, this has

¹⁴³ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1269C).

¹⁴⁴ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:59.¹⁰⁻¹⁴; PG 76:125CD).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:59.³⁷, 92.⁶; PG 76:128B, 209B); *QUSC* (PG 75:1272BC).

¹⁴⁶ *QUSC* (PG 75:1275A).

¹⁴⁷ *Ep.* 45 (ACO 1.1.7:155.^{5ff}; PG 77:233Df).

¹⁴⁸ *QUSC* (PG 75:1353A).

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1265A-C).

implications for the Eucharist. In receiving the sacramental elements, we become participants (μέτοχοι) in the flesh and blood of Christ our Saviour.¹⁵⁰ The flesh one receives, however, is not simple human flesh; neither is it the flesh of someone made holy by being connected to the Word by a unity of dignity or by the Word indwelling him. Rather, the flesh received in the Eucharist is the flesh of the Word, which truly (ἀληθῶς) is his own (ἰδία), and is therefore life giving (ζωοποιός).¹⁵¹ If the flesh of Christ belongs to someone besides the Word, Cyril warns, then the Eucharist is cannibalism (ἀνθρωποφαγία).¹⁵² Cyril's argument provides greater clarity for our understanding of his concept of the transelementation of the human flesh by the union. The flesh of Christ is not mere human flesh, but is human flesh that has been rendered life giving by the Word, as it is his flesh. To eat mere human flesh is indeed cannibalism; but to eat the transelemented flesh of the Word Incarnate is to participate in life, as the Word is life and life giving by nature. Cyril's picture of the Word Incarnate as Saviour because he has assumed human nature and transelemented it, passing along the new incorruptible life to humankind, requires that the human body and soul be completely that of the Word, and not belong to someone else. Otherwise, salvation is impossible, and the Eucharist is cannibalism.¹⁵³ The human body and soul, which the Word takes as his own from the Virgin, is the instrument through which he performs miracles and gives life to humankind. In the Eucharist, the participant receives the very own life-giving flesh and blood of the Logos Incarnate.

*Analogies Concerning the Impassible Suffering of the Word*¹⁵⁴

We are now faced with a dilemma similar to that which we encountered in the previous section. There the issues were the miracle-working and life-giving properties of Christ's human body. Cyril explained

¹⁵⁰ *Ep.* 17 (ACO 1.1.1:37.²⁵; PG 77:113C).

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:37.²⁶⁻²⁹; PG 77:113D).

¹⁵² *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:84.²³; PG 76:189D).

¹⁵³ *QUSC* (PG 75:1361A).

¹⁵⁴ Two recent articles have addressed the issue of the impassible suffering of the Word in Cyril: J. O'Keefe, 'Impassible Suffering? Divine Passion and Fifth-century christology', *TheoStud* 58 (1997), 39-60; and J.M. Hallman, 'The Seed of Fire: Divine Suffering in the christology of Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius of Constantinople', *J ECS* 5 (1997), 369-391. Neither of these articles seeks to analyse the images Cyril uses to illustrate what he means by impassible suffering.

how a fully human body could give life, by appealing to the union, in which the Word makes the humanity his own. By this union of possession, the Word uses the body as his instrument for accomplishing his divine works, including working miracles and giving life in the Eucharist. Now, we must examine Cyril's affirmation that the impassible Word of God experienced a human death. Once again, we will discover the importance of a proper conception of the union.

The most obvious statement that God, as Christ, suffered and died is made in Cyril's final *Anathema*. In this anathema, Cyril denounces those who do not confess that God the Word suffered (παθόντα) in the flesh, was crucified in the flesh, and experienced death in the flesh.¹⁵⁵ In explaining this remarkable statement, he initially affirms the impassibility and immortality of the Logos, who is beyond suffering.¹⁵⁶ He is incorruptible and not affected by human passions. However, the right faith is that the Word suffered for humankind and died to redeem it. It was not an ordinary human being who died on the cross, but the Word of God the Father himself. All of this he did in the person of Christ, i.e., as a human being. Christ is Θεός, but is the God who suffered in the flesh.

This is just as apparent in an important section of Cyril's treatise *Adversus Nestorium*. Cyril's quotes Nestorius' attack on his notion that the crucified 'Lord of glory' is the Logos of God.¹⁵⁷ The Bishop of Constantinople enquires who Cyril thinks was weak, and suffered the death on the cross; was it God the Word? The Alexandrian answers in the affirmative. He says there are two reasons why one must believe that the Word of God suffered and died. First, a perfect sacrifice was necessary to provide for redemption. Only God himself is perfect; therefore, the death had to be that of the Word. Second, Scripture teaches that the Word of God the Father suffered in the flesh.¹⁵⁸ The *Carmen Christi* says that the one who lowered himself and suffered was equal to God in everything. Consequently, Paul is speaking of God the Word. Cyril says that the Word voluntarily experienced death, though being impassible as true God.¹⁵⁹ He confesses one Christ, Son of God, and Lord of glory, who is the Word of God the Father

¹⁵⁵ *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:42.³⁻⁴; PG 77:121D).

¹⁵⁶ *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:25.^{16ff}; PG 76:312CD).

¹⁵⁷ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:95.^{31ff}; PG 76:220B), (=Loofs 357.¹¹⁻²⁶). Nestorius is making reference to 1 Corinthians 2:8.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:96.¹³⁻³⁰; PG 76:221B); citing 1 Peter 4:1.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:96.³⁶⁻³⁸; PG 76:221D).

become a human being (ἐνανθρωπήσαντα) for us (δι' ἡμᾶς). He underwent a human death for the salvation of humankind.¹⁶⁰

This is a recurring theme for Cyril throughout the christological controversy. In the beginning of the controversy, he writes that if Christ is not Θεός, then we have been saved by the death of an ordinary human being.¹⁶¹ This cannot be, as only God can destroy death. Therefore, the one who was crucified is truly God (Θεός ἀληθώς) and King by nature (Βασιλεὺς κατὰ φύσιν), and is the Lord of Glory (Κύριος δόξης).¹⁶² This is echoed in a letter to Nestorius in which Cyril writes that the Word of God experienced death and rose again in the person of Christ.¹⁶³ Because Christ is God, and Christ suffered and died, Cyril confesses that he who suffered in the flesh is God.¹⁶⁴ Cyril is herein maintaining the paradox that although Christ is God, he also suffers and dies. God is impassible and immortal, he is untouched by the passions of humankind and is incorruptible. However, in Christ he experiences the sufferings of humanity and is crucified on the cross. The death of Christ is no mere phantasm, but is a true and real death. This places Cyril in a remarkable position of needing to affirm the impassibility of God and the human death of God in the same individual—Christ. We will now examine the analogies he uses to illustrate his understanding of this phenomenon.

Body-soul

Cyril says that the Word of God gave his life on the cross for the salvation of the world.¹⁶⁵ The one who is Life is said to have died. How can this be? God the Word experienced death in his own body. This can be illustrated with Cyril's favourite analogy: body-soul. He says that when a person dies, the soul is not said to be destroyed at the same time as the body. However, it is still called the death of the person (ἄνθρωπος). This illustrates the death of Emmanuel, and how the Word is said to have experienced it. The Word gave his own body to death, suffering nothing in his own nature (φύσις), because he is Life and the one who gives life.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, he made the expe-

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:97.⁷⁻⁸; PG 76:224B).

¹⁶¹ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:22.²⁵-23.¹⁰; PG 77:37CD).

¹⁶² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:23.¹¹⁻¹²; PG 77:40A). Cf. 1 Corinthians 2:8.

¹⁶³ *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:27.¹⁵; PG 77:48A).

¹⁶⁴ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:61.²⁹; PG 76:132D).

¹⁶⁵ *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:21.³²⁻³³; PG 77:36C).

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:22.⁵⁻⁷; PG 77:36D).

riences of the flesh his own, meaning that the suffering (τὸ παθεῖν) was his as well.

In another place, Cyril draws upon the body-soul analogy again within the context of the Word's suffering. He records Nestorius' inquiry as to who was taken captive by the Jews and was slaughtered, God the Word or the humanity.¹⁶⁷ The issue here is the impassibility of God, and Cyril's claim that the Word died for the salvation of humankind. He responds to Nestorius with an analogy. He says that when the martyrs were taken prisoner, and were put to the sword or burned to death, their souls did not suffer these things *directly*, according to their own nature, but they still will receive the reward from Christ.¹⁶⁸ In other words, in reality, although the souls did not experience the sufferings of the body *in their own nature*, they did experience the sufferings *in their own bodies*. The soul is impassible, yet it participate in the experiences of the body by means of their relationship. It is the entire human being which suffers, not just the body. Likewise, the Word is impassible *qua* God, but takes as his own the sufferings of his flesh.¹⁶⁹ The Word did not suffer according to his divine nature, but is said to have been crucified nonetheless, because it was his body which died. In the same way that the souls of martyrs are said to experience the death of their bodies, though *indirectly*, so too does the impassible Word experience the death of his body.

In another passage Cyril states that the way in which the Word was united with our nature is wholly ineffable and known only to God.¹⁷⁰ We should not find it incredible that we affirm something that we do not and cannot understand, he argues. For example, we do not know how the body and the soul of a human being are united, yet we know that they are. He then uses this image to illustrate how the Word experiences the sufferings of the body. He says that in the union of body and soul, the soul makes the sufferings of the body its own, though it does not suffer in itself. The body is moved to passions and desires, and because of the union the soul experiences them as well, though not in its own nature. When the desires of the body are satisfied the soul is also satisfied. If the body is injured, the soul co-grieves with the body because the body is its own, though in its own nature the soul does not suffer these things *directly*. This illustrates the case with Emmanuel. Though as God he remained impassible, when

¹⁶⁷ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:99.²⁰⁻²⁸; PG 76:229B) (=Loofs 229.4-16).

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:100.^{28ff}; PG 76:232CD).

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:100.³⁴⁻³⁸; PG 76:232D).

¹⁷⁰ *Scholia* (PG 75:1376C).

the flesh with a soul to which he was united suffered, he was impassibly aware of the sufferings. Because it was his own body which suffered, he made the sufferings his own as well. Therefore, the Word is said to experience hunger, weariness, and death on our behalf. However, he suffers these things impassibly, as the soul experiences the sufferings of the body in ordinary human beings.

Stone

Another image which illustrates how the Word is said to be participant in things properly attributed to humanity is that of the anointed stone. Nestorius had argued that the name 'Christ' signifies the two natures, and that the Virgin gave birth to the humanity which is called Son of God because of its connection with the Word. Birth and death are never used with reference to God the Word, only with reference to Christ. Therefore, Scripture does not say, "God sent God the Word", but "God sent his son", speaking of the two natures.¹⁷¹ Cyril interprets this as an attempt to divide Christ into two individuals, and that the title 'Christ' is used only of God the Word who has become a human being and not of some other human being connected to the Logos.¹⁷² However, the title does not refer to the Word without his flesh, but only in that he has by the *kenosis* come in the form of a slave and become like us is he said to have been anointed. He was not anointed in his own nature, but in his humanity. Therefore, it is not a person separate from the Word who has been anointed, but the very Word of God the Father in the Incarnation.¹⁷³ To illustrate how this happened, Cyril draws upon the account of Jacob's travels to Mesopotamia.¹⁷⁴ Along the way Jacob is said to have rested his head on a stone and slept. During his sleep he had his famous dream, and awoke to anoint the stone with oil. This anointed stone illustrates the anointing of Jesus Christ, as Christ is called the corner stone and the foundation of Zion..¹⁷⁵ Cyril says that the entire stone was not anointed, but only the surface of it. Likewise, the Word was not anointed in his own nature, but only on the 'surface', or in his humanity.¹⁷⁶ However, the Word is said to be

¹⁷¹ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:36.²¹⁻³²; PG 76:69AB) (=Loofs 273.^{18-274.17}).

¹⁷² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:36.³³⁻⁴⁰; PG 76:69C).

¹⁷³ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:37.⁵⁻¹⁴; PG 76:69Df).

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Genesis 28:7ff.

¹⁷⁵ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:37.²¹⁻²³; PG 76:72B); citing Isaiah 28:16 and Psalm 117:22.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:37.²⁶⁻³⁰; PG 76:72C).

anointed because of the true union (ένωσις ἀληθῆ) with the flesh, which is anointed. In this same way, the Word suffers in the flesh, though in his own nature he is impassible as God.

Iron and fire

Cyril says that the only way for death's mastery over humankind to be broken was for the Only-begotten to become Incarnate.¹⁷⁷ Thus, he became as we are and made as his own a corruptible body which was capable of death, although he himself is Life. In so doing, he could destroy death. Therefore, the death was his own, though he remained impassible *qua* God.¹⁷⁸ By nature, the Word is impassible, but he *chose* to suffer in order to save those who are mortal. He underwent a human birth and made his own a body capable of dying, so that he could suffer in his own flesh, though remain impassible in his divinity.¹⁷⁹ However, it could then be said that the suffering left its mark (ἐναπομάζεται) on God the Word, and thereby damaged his dignity as God.¹⁸⁰ Cyril agrees that the crucifixion of the Logos of God appears as folly, but the Word willingly became like us in order to suffer a death which would restore humanity to incorruptibility.¹⁸¹ Consequently, it is rightly said that the same individual both suffered and did not suffer. The Word suffered in his own flesh, but did not suffer in the nature of divinity, as he is impassible *qua* God.¹⁸² How this happened is ineffable, Cyril maintains, but it is proper to confess that the Word suffered, unless, that is, the birth from the Virgin is not his, but that of someone else. Moreover, he affirms that the sufferings of the flesh, though experienced by the Word *impassibly*, do not damage his divinity. He then illustrates what he is saying by means of the analogy of a piece of iron placed in a fire. He prefaces his use of this image by reminding the reader that an illustration points one's mind toward the truth, yet does not explain it fully.¹⁸³ He then says that if iron, or something similar, is heated by fire, and then is struck, the iron is 'injured', but the nature of the fire is unaffected. It is in this way that one can understand more clearly how the Word can suffer in the flesh, but not suffer in his divinity.

¹⁷⁷ *QUSC* (PG 75:1352B).

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1352D).

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1353C).

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1356D).

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1357AB).

¹⁸² *Ibid.* (PG 75:1357C).

¹⁸³ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1357CD).

The Two Birds

The final image we will examine in this section is that of the two birds, taken from an ordinance recorded in Leviticus chapter fourteen. The image is found within the context of Cyril's explanation of how one can speak of the passion of Christ in two manners, saying that the Word both suffered and did not suffer.¹⁸⁴ The death, Cyril says, belongs to the economy, as the Word makes his own the experiences of the flesh, by means of the ineffable union. However, he remains external to the sufferings in his own divine nature. This is seen in the experience of a human being, whose soul is external to the suffering of the body in its own nature, but is said to participate in the sufferings of the body because it is its own body. In this same way, the Word is said to suffer in his own body, yet he remains impassible in his own divine nature.¹⁸⁵

The Law teaches that a leper is unclean and should be removed from the camp. If the leper is healed, however, he should be ceremonially cleansed.¹⁸⁶ The ritual required the priest to take two birds, and kill only one of them. The living bird would then be washed in the blood of the bird which was killed, and the blood would then be sprinkled on the healed leper. In this way, the restored leper would be ceremonially cleansed. This is an illustration of Christ. It does not show that there were two sons, but that there was one individual out of two things.¹⁸⁷ Therefore, when one bird is killed, and the other allowed to live, it illustrates that the Word lived, although his flesh died. In addition, the Word participated in the death of the flesh by means of his union with it.¹⁸⁸ In other words, Cyril says, the living Word of God took for himself the sufferings of the flesh, though in his own nature he remained impassible.

From his analogies, we can see that Cyril's answer to the question of how God the Word is said to suffer and die, is the same as his answer as to how the flesh of Christ is life giving: the ineffable union. In his exposition of the Nicene Creed, Cyril affirms the statement that the Son of God became Incarnate, suffered, died, and rose from the dead on the third day.¹⁸⁹ This is an intriguing claim, as the Word is impassible in his own nature. No one would claim that the impassible

¹⁸⁴ *Scholia* (PG 75:1405Cff). This passage extant only in Latin.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1405AB).

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1405C).

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1406A).

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1406B).

¹⁸⁹ *Ep.* 55 (ACO 1.1.4:58.22-24; PG 77:312B).

nature of God was somehow possible. However, Cyril explains, because the Logos has made the flesh his own, and thereby become a human being, one must confess that according to the economy the one who is impassible *qua* God indeed suffers *qua* a human being, because he suffers in his flesh. If it is true that the one who is above the law becomes under the law, while remaining law giver; and that the master comes in the form of a slave, yet remains master; is it incredible that he can suffer humanly (ἄνθρωπινως), and yet remain impassible as God?¹⁹⁰ Cyril denies that the Word suffered with regard to the nature of divinity (φύσις Θεότητος), but confesses that he suffered in his own possible flesh.¹⁹¹

In his *Anathemas* to Nestorius, Cyril condemns those who deny his interpretation of the Nicene Statement: that the Word of God the Father suffered in the flesh, was crucified in the flesh, and tasted death in the flesh.¹⁹² He explains that this anathema does nothing to diminish the impassibility and immortality of the Logos; he remains beyond suffering and corruptibility in his own nature even in the Incarnation.¹⁹³ However, the impassible Logos made as his own the human flesh which he took from the Virgin, and human flesh has none of these characteristics. He made the corruptible flesh his own in order that he could suffer on our behalf, and thereby set us free from sin and death by rising from the dead. The one who died on the cross for us was not an ordinary human being, but it was God the Word himself.¹⁹⁴

Cyril's affirmation that Christ is one individual, the Word of God Incarnate, leaves him with the difficulty of explaining to whom the advancement in stature, wisdom, and grace belongs.¹⁹⁵ Scripture attributes this growth to the Word, in that his own flesh grew according to its own nature. In other words, it is proper for human nature to advance in wisdom, stature, and grace, and the Word permitted his own body to follow its natural path of growth.¹⁹⁶ Economically, God the Logos lived a complete human life, and subjected himself to the humanity. Although perfect in himself, he has become as we are, and in doing so makes what belongs naturally to us and our nature his

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.4:58.²⁹⁻³⁴; PG 77:312CD).

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.4:59.⁴⁻⁶; PG 77:313A).

¹⁹² *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:42.³⁻⁵; PG 77:121D).

¹⁹³ *Explicatio* (ACO 1.1.5:25.¹⁷⁻¹⁹; PG 76:312C).

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.5:25.²³⁻²⁵; PG 76:312D).

¹⁹⁵ *QUSC* (PG 75:1332A).

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1332B).

own.¹⁹⁷ This includes weaknesses like hunger and thirst, but also sufferings, corruptibility, and death. Economically, the impassible and incorruptible Word of God has attributed these weaknesses to himself. He has done this in order that we might be reconciled to the Father. The Word condescended to the form of a slave, and in his own sufferings was reforming (ἀναμορφῶν) human nature to what it was in the beginning.¹⁹⁸ It was indeed the Word of God the Father who suffered and died for humankind, as he makes his own the things of the flesh, including its human death.¹⁹⁹

Consequently, it is proper to say that the same individual both suffered and did not suffer.²⁰⁰ The one who died for our salvation was no ordinary human being like us, but was God the Word. He did not suffer according to his own nature, however, but according to his own body, which is corruptible and passible. He therefore is said to suffer in the body, with regard to his humanity, but to remain impassible with regard to his divinity. His death is not the death of another human being, as the death of an ordinary human being could never save, but is his own death, though he remained impassible as God.²⁰¹ In the human death and resurrection of the Word, human nature was transelemented (ἀναστοιχειουμένης) to a new, incorruptible life. Therefore, the Logos did not subject his body to death for nothing, but for the salvation of the human race. The impassible Word did not suffer death simply as an added experience, or for no purpose; he suffered for the sake of all humankind, and economically (οἰκονομικῶς) allowed death to exercise dominion over his flesh.²⁰² He then conquered death in his resurrection in order that corruptibility and death would be defeated for all humankind. If the Word Incarnate had not suffered for humanity as a human being, Cyril maintains, he would not have saved us as God.²⁰³ He died in the flesh as a human being, and came back to life by means of his own Holy Spirit. Christ must not be conceived of as an ordinary human being like us who is merely an instrument for the Word's use. If he is not God by nature (φύσει) and truly (ἀληθῶς) Son of God, then our salvation has been

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1332C).

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1337B).

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1340AB).

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1341A).

²⁰¹ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1353A).

²⁰² *Ep.* 1 (ACO 1.1.1:22.¹³⁻¹⁵, PG 77:37A).

²⁰³ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:22.¹⁸⁻¹⁹, PG 77:37B).

provided by a human being rather than by God.²⁰⁴ Only the Logos of God is able to overcome death and restore humankind to incorruptibility. By assuming our nature, giving it over to death, and then overcoming death *in the body*, the Word Incarnate has given life to humankind.²⁰⁵ The one who was crucified is truly (ἀληθῶς) God and King according to his nature (κατὰ φύσιν).

Cyril explains to Nestorius what is meant by his claim that the Word died and rose again.²⁰⁶ The Word is incorporeal (ἄσώματον) and therefore impassible (ἀπαθές) in his own nature. As a consequence, Cyril does not mean that the Word suffered and died *in his own nature*. Rather, because his own body experienced the sufferings and death, he himself is said to have suffered, but not for his own sake, but for ours. The impassible Word was in the suffering body (ἦν ὁ ἀπαθὴς ἐν τῷ πάσχοντι σώματι). The Word is incorruptible, and is life and life giving by nature. However, his own body died, and he is therefore said to have experienced the death of his body, though his own nature did not, of course, die. This death was for our sake. He subjected his body to death, and raised it from the dead, that we might be saved.

Nestorius objected vehemently to Cyril's claim that the same person was Son of God from eternity and was economically a human being; and that this one person suffered in the flesh for humankind and rose from the dead. He interpreted Cyril to be teaching a passible God.²⁰⁷ Cyril says that Nestorius believes himself to be pious by defending the impassible and incorruptible Word of God against the notion of passibility, but is in reality profaning the economy of the Incarnation. It is true that the nature of the Word is completely impassible and beyond death. However, in the economy he willingly chose to suffer and die *in the flesh*, though not in his own nature.²⁰⁸ Although he is impassible as God, he experienced death economically in his own flesh. But this death was not for its own sake. Rather, he died in his humanity in order that he might conquer death, as he is life in his own nature, and therein transelement (μεταστοιχειώση) the corruptible human body to incorruptibility.²⁰⁹ In doing so, he provides his work of transelementation for all of humankind. The Logos

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:22.²⁵⁻²⁸; PG 77:37C).

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.1:23.¹⁻⁴; PG 77:37D).

²⁰⁶ *Ep.* 4 (ACO 1.1.1:27.^{14-28.2}; PG 77:48AB).

²⁰⁷ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:92.^{25-29, 31-35}; PG 76:212AB) (=Loofs 357.⁵⁻¹⁰).

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:93.⁵⁻⁷; PG 76:212D).

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:93.¹¹; PG 212D).

suffered for us, and through the suffering and death of his own body he has saved us and reconciled us to God, making him the mediator between us and the Father.²¹⁰

There is no shame in attributing to the Word Incarnate the weaknesses of humanity, because he has made these weaknesses his own on account of the economy.²¹¹ He hungers, thirsts, suffers, and dies because of the Incarnation. Cyril maintains that either one separates the Word from the passions of Christ, thus attributing them to an ordinary human being, or one confesses that although the Word is impassible in his own, divine nature, he has subjected himself to the weaknesses of the humanity for us. In other words, he suffered in his flesh and human nature, and did so for our salvation. He remained the impassible God, but became a human being and experienced the weaknesses of a human being economically, or on our behalf. In order to redeem humankind, the Word allowed his own flesh to live in accordance with its own laws and weaknesses, and the human experiences of the body are said to be those of the Word, because it is *his* body.²¹² However, though he died humanly in his own flesh, he overcame death divinely, by means of his own Spirit.²¹³

Nestorius had explained the death of Christ by attributing the sufferings to the human being Jesus connected to the Word. It was not God who died and rose from the dead, but Jesus.²¹⁴ Cyril responds with his claim that the Word of God is Jesus himself. It is his body, therefore, that suffered, died, and was raised from the dead. He permitted his own body to die, and then he himself raised it to life again. The body of the Word Incarnate died according to its own nature, and the Word allowed it to die in order that he might give it life again, and that we might benefit from his death and resurrection.²¹⁵ Just as one says that a human being has died, although alone the body is actually dead, so too with Christ.²¹⁶ The soul of a human being does not die when the human being dies, but the entire human being is said to have experienced the death. Because the Word of God has participated in flesh and blood like us, the body is said to be his own. As a consequence, when the body died, the Word attributes

²¹⁰ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:93.³²⁻³⁵, 94.³⁻⁷; PG 76:213C, 216A).

²¹¹ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:98.¹⁻⁵; PG 76:225B).

²¹² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:98.³²⁻³⁴; PG 76:228B).

²¹³ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:98.²³⁻²⁶; PG 76:228A).

²¹⁴ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:103.⁷⁻²⁰; PG 76:237D-240B) (=Loofs 267.¹¹-268.^{3, 12-14}). See also *Scholia* (PG 75:1408-1412).

²¹⁵ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:103.³⁸-104.²; PG 76:240D).

²¹⁶ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:105.²²⁻³⁰; PG 76:244D).

the death to himself by means of the true union (ἀληθῆς ἐνότης), though in his own divine nature he remains impassible.²¹⁷

With regard both to the life giving character of the human flesh of Christ, and the impassible suffering of the Logos, Cyril refers to the ineffable union in his explanation. It is a union of possession in which the Word is the sole subject of all the actions and experiences of Christ, because in his Incarnation, he is Christ. It is improper to apply the sayings or actions of Christ, as recorded in Scripture, to two different *prosopa* or *hypostases*; such as attributing the divine actions and sayings to the Word and the human actions and sayings to some other human being connected to him.²¹⁸ There is only one Son of God, Cyril says, and that is the Word become a human being. Therefore, all the sayings, actions, experiences, and descriptions of Christ found in Scripture are attributed to this one individual.²¹⁹ Even hungering and growing weary are said to be experiences of the Word; but not the unenfleshed (γυμνός) Word, but the Word Incarnate.²²⁰ Because the Word has become Incarnate, and thus has made the human flesh his own, he has economically appropriated (κατ' οἰκείαν οἰκονομικὴν) the weaknesses of the flesh to himself and made them his own by means of the *kenosis*. Consequently, both the human and divine actions and experiences of Christ as recorded in the gospels are appropriately attributed to the Word Incarnate. The Word has become Incarnate, and is therefore no longer unenfleshed (γυμνός). He has been united to flesh and is a human being like us. Although in his own divine nature the Word is incorporeal, because of the economy the things that belong to the body belong to him as it is his body.²²¹ Consequently, the properties of the humanity (τὰ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος) now also belong to the Word, and the properties of the Word now also belong to the humanity.²²² In this reference to the so-called *communicatio idiomatum*, Cyril explains that it is in this way that one conceives of one Christ. In other words, as we have seen, the Word

²¹⁷ *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:105.²⁹; PG 76:244D).

²¹⁸ *Anathemas* (ACO 1.1.1:41.¹⁻⁴; PG 77:120D); *QUSC* (PG 75:1328B).

²¹⁹ *QUSC* (PG 75:1328C).

²²⁰ *Ibid.* (PG 75:1328D, 1340B).

²²¹ *Adversus Nestorium* (ACO 1.1.6:63.³⁸⁻⁴⁰; PG 76:137C).

²²² *Ibid.* (ACO 1.1.6:63.⁴²⁻⁴³; PG 76:137C). Dratsellas' interpretation of Cyril is that 'the two natures are...inseparably united in the One Person, not being confused, and that they both transfer and communicate their properties, their Idiomata, to the One Person which is their centre, and in which they are united, and not to each other'. This statement seems to be contradicted by a later one: 'The Divine nature is the giver while the human is the receiver'. See 'Questions on christology', 221-226, esp. 222.

has appropriated the properties of the humanity to himself, and has given to his own human nature the properties he possesses in his own divine nature. This is not a mutual exchange, whereby the Word offers his divine properties of Christ, and the humanity offers its human properties to Christ. Rather, the Word is the active agent. It is God the Logos who willingly submits to the limits of a human life, and yet remains God. It is the Word who transelements the humanity, using it to perform his own divine deeds. The *communicatio*, then, for Cyril, is a mechanism for explaining the actions and experiences of Christ, which, from the outside appear inconsistent, yet from the perspective of the economy, or the *kenosis*, are entirely consistent with the overall purpose of redemption. For this reason, Cyril professes to believe that the Son of God is one individual; that is, Jesus Christ.²²³ As the Word of God, he has been begotten of the Father from eternity, and has, in recent times, become a human being by means of a genuine human birth. Consequently, all the actions and experiences of Christ—both the divine and the human—are properly attributed to him. Although he remains the impassible Word of God, he has made everything that belongs to the human flesh his own. The human birth from Mary, as well as the human death on the cross, each belong to the Word of God who has become Incarnate. Likewise, the human body which is united to the Logos is used as an instrument by him to give life to humankind. Talk of life giving flesh and impassible suffering is not ‘mythical nonsense’, but is a genuine attempt to express the *mysterium Christi*, in which God graciously condescended to live a human life in order to conquer the corruption which had plagued humanity since the fall. The union was not the end, but the means to the end, and must always be interpreted in that light.

Concluding Remarks

What, then, can we say about Cyril’s understanding of the union in the light of this investigation of his imagery? We can see that Cyril’s christology is not a static, unification theory in which he must discover a way to glue two things together. He is not looking to describe how two things come together and result in one. This is the fundamental problem Cyril saw in Nestorius’ approach to christology. The Antiochene, in Cyril’s mind, wanted to describe Christ as the juxtaposition of the Word and a separate human being. In other words, he

²²³ *QUSC* (PG 75:1361BC).

perceived Nestorius to start with two things, and attempt to find a way to produce one from them. The same criticism is applicable to Apollinarius. The Alexandrian heretic was correct in assuming that two completes cannot be united to produce a single entity. But this axiom is not applicable to the union of divinity and humanity for two reasons. First, the Incarnation is not a puzzle whereby two pieces are joined together; it is the becoming human of the Word. Second, the manner in which the Word united human nature to himself, thereby becoming a human being, is ineffable. It is not a technical process of combination. Cyril's christology had a different starting point from either of these two. It is therefore misguided to speak of him as being midway between Nestorius and Apollinarius. Cyril was actually on a different spectrum than either of them. Instead of beginning with two objects—the Word and a human being—Cyril began with the Word's act of condescension on behalf of humankind. The only way for God to save humanity was to live a human life, die a human death, and be raised from the dead through his own divine power. To accomplish this redemption, the Word became a human being; that is, he lived a genuine human life. Cyril uses his concept of union to explain *how* the Word became a human being: he united a human body and a human soul to himself, taking for himself a complete human nature. By adding to himself a human nature, the Word now is a human being, in addition to remaining the eternal Son of God. The union, though, is not one of participation, in which the Word is a partner with another human being, but one in which the Word unites himself to human flesh. The Logos, who inherently possesses an impassible and incorporeal divine nature, now possesses a passible and corporeal human nature. He has added something to himself which he did not have before the Incarnation. But, again, this is no static, technical union. Rather, it is a union of possession. The Word has as his own the body and soul which he has united to himself. Consequently, Christ is the Word Incarnate, and not the Word connected to another human being.

Cyril's picture of the union is incomplete without his description of Christ's actions. In other words, the person of Christ is inextricably linked to the work of Christ. This is nowhere seen any better than in the paradoxes of the life giving humanity and the suffering God. In both instances, Cyril's recognises that the Word has united to himself human flesh in such a way that he is the sole subject of Christ's actions and experiences. Cyril's description and illustration of his understanding of the manner in which human flesh gives life reveals a union in which the Word possesses ownership of the flesh. This is essential for the flesh to be life giving. Only God is able to give life, as

he is life himself. Therefore, for the flesh to give life it must be the flesh of God. The Word has made the flesh his own by means of the ineffable union, and has by virtue of the union made it life giving. With regard to the suffering Word, we have seen that Cyril's solution to the paradox lies in his understanding of the Logos as owner of the flesh, just as any other human being owns his own flesh. In his divinity, the Word is impassible. But after the Incarnation, the Word no longer possesses a divine nature alone, but also possesses a human nature. It is in this new human nature that the Word suffers, while remaining impassible with regard to his divine nature.

The most fundamental component of Cyril's picture of Christ is the purpose for which the Word became a human being. The union is nonsensical without recognising the reason for it. Cyril is insistent that the Word had no need to become a human being in himself, but willingly condescended in order to redeem humankind. Cyril's description and illustration of the union, including the actions and experiences of Christ, must be interpreted in the light of this purpose. The Logos united humanity to himself, thereby living a human life, in order to enable him to subject his own human body to a real death, and a short time later to raise it from the dead. In so doing, he would conquer the corruptibility of his own human nature and that of all humankind. His divine nature did not experience death, but his human nature did. Because the human nature is that of the Word Incarnate, then the Word Incarnate is said to have experienced death. Cyril's christology is rooted in the purpose for the Word's Incarnation: salvation. The union of the Word and his divine nature is, therefore, not a static, technical process, but a purposive process in which God the Logos unites to himself humanity in order to transelement it, restoring it to incorruptibility.

CONCLUSION

What is to be said about Cyril of Alexandria's christological imagery? With regard to his *use* of imagery, there are four important observations we can make. First, Cyril is willing to look to two sources for analogies: Scripture, particularly the Old Testament, and natural phenomena. When he perceives in a certain text an idea which correlates with something said explicitly about Christ or the Logos elsewhere in Scripture, Cyril tends to find that passage useful in illustrating something about the Incarnation. Far from being allegory, this hermeneutical principle, at least for the Alexandrian, is founded on the belief that all of Scripture is ultimately authored by one individual—God Himself. It is natural for him, then, to conclude that there is but one overarching *skopos* to the Sacred Writing; namely, to reveal God. Because the Incarnation is the climactic work of God's self-revelation, that event becomes central to all Scripture. Consequently, all Scripture is at least at some level concerned with the person and work of Christ, God Incarnate. By cross-referencing components of the text with statements made about Christ elsewhere in Scripture, Cyril is able to utilise the biblical passage as an analogy of some aspect of the Incarnate event. The narrative, ceremony, or other passage is not considered to be the source of christological understanding, but rather a tool for illustrating it. For example, the passage about the two birds from Exodus is not the source of knowledge about Christ's passion, but instead serves to illustrate how the impassible Word can be said to suffer. Because the analogy is from Scripture, it carries great weight. However, it still falls short of the truth, though it is a useful pointer to the reality of the Word's economy. There is no disconnect in Cyril's mind between the literal understanding of texts (which he always affirms), and the spiritual or christological understanding of texts wherein some component of the Incarnation is illustrated. A quite interesting, yet consistent, hermeneutic.

In addition to his Scriptural images, Cyril also employed philosophical or physical images. He believes these natural phenomena reveal something about the reality of the *mysterium Christi*. The natural phenomena which are found in Cyril's christology have their background primarily in discussions of union. This fact can be misleading on the surface. One could easily conclude that Cyril's christology is nothing more than a "physical" or "static" view of the union of divin-

ity and humanity in Christ. However, this conclusion could be no further from reality. Instead, the Archbishop uses these images analogically, rather than technically. His interest is not in a static coming-together of two christological jigsaw pieces, but in a dynamic, purposive event: the Incarnation of God the Word.

A second observation is that essential to understanding Cyril's use of imagery from both sources is the awareness that he intends for it an analogical, and therefore qualifying, role. These analogies, both from Scripture and from nature are used by Cyril to explain further his christological formulae. They are not explanations of the Incarnation itself, but illustrations of Cyril's understanding of it. A pattern develops in which he begins with a confession of orthodox faith. On occasion he is content to simply state this belief and demand conformity to it from his readers. However, he often follows this confession with further explanation of what he means. His analogies serve in the capacity of *illustrating* his formulae, rather than *describing* the event of Incarnation. This fact allows the interpreter to read Cyril *through* these images, rather *in* them. In other words, his imagery is a tool he uses to establish a different rhetoric. They serve to make more clear what he believed about the Incarnation of the Word, and how, in particular, he interpretes Scriptural references to the event and the Nicene Symbol.

The third observation we can make is that Cyril uses christological imagery often in his dogmatic and polemical treatises, but seldom in his letters. Why would this be so? If our conclusions about the role of his analogies being qualifiers and illustrations is correct, then an explanation is apparent: they are unnecessary in correspondence, especially that with Nestorius. The Alexandrian's imagery is intended to clarify and qualify his various christological statements and formulae. For example, when writing to Nestorius, Cyril was concerned with stating the orthodox understanding of the Incarnation. This usually entailed the use of biblical and Nicene statements with little or no clarification. However, as we have seen, on some occasions, he would seek to clarify the statements he makes. There was a need for confession primarily, and clarification only secondarily. In contrast, in his theological treatises, and even his correspondence with Succensus, he is concerned with more than the statement of orthodoxy (i.e., the Word became flesh); he is also interested in illustrating what he means by such a statement. It is at this point that he calls upon the tool of imagery to serve as a mechanism for qualification. This is similar to Norris's conclusions about Cyril's "two ways of talking".¹

¹ Norris, 'Christological Models'. See Introduction to the present work.

Finally, Cyril's images are indeed an important part of his christological expression. Their supporting role as illustrators opens up his understanding of the Incarnation for the observer; and without them one is left only with the statements and formulae, which are orthodox representations of the truth, but remain a matter of interpretation. This fact can be seen easily in the numerous ways of interpreting Nicaea in subsequent years, whether in Alexandria, Rome, Antioch, or Constantinople. While the Nicene Symbol was the standard of orthodoxy, it was open to interpretation (thus the controversy between Cyril and Nestorius). Cyril's many illustrations which clarify his own interpretation of Nicaea are invaluable tools for understanding better his christological thought. By observing Cyril's statements through his imagery, one can see more deeply into his understanding of the person and work of Christ.

Now we can turn to extracting the christological content of Cyril's imagery. With regard to the *content* of his imagery, we find Cyril rejecting two infamous heresies, Nestorianism and Apollinarianism; and articulating a christology comprised of three important ideas: Christ is true God from true God, Christ is a complete human being, and Christ is a single individual. Cyril understood the teaching of Nestorius to entail the separation of the Word and an individual human being named Jesus. In this instance Christ is the result of an external, participative relationship in which the Word is juxtaposed to a human individual. These two constituents are believed to be held together by the goodwill and grace of God in which he bestows upon the human individual the same appellation and dignity as the Word. He believes that Nestorius is searching for a technical process that describes a collective unity, while allowing the constituents to remain unconfused and separate, while retaining their respective properties in their separate entirety. The ultimate problem with Nestorian christology, as Cyril understands it, is its denial of salvific suffering to the Word of God. If the suffering of Christ is attributed solely to the human being called Jesus, and the divine actions solely to the Logos, then Christ is not the Saviour. There must be a "real union" of the Word and humanity if there is to be any redemption.

Nestorius and many of the Orientals charged Cyril with Apollinarianism. The accusation entailed teaching Christ to be an amalgam of the Word and human flesh in which one or both was changed in some essential manner. Along with his explicit denials of such a charge, Cyril sets out to illustrate what such a christology would mean. The Apollinarian interpretation of the biblical and Nicene accounts of the Incarnation was just as improper as the Nestorian understanding. Both misread and misunderstood what it meant for

the Word to “become flesh”. Moreover, Cyril not only rejects Nestorianism and Apollinarianism proper, but also, just as importantly, he rejects any approach to christology which begins with seeking to glue together two christological puzzle pieces, a so-called unification christology. In both instances [Nestorianism and Apollinarianism] the question was how to take divinity and humanity, and put them together so that Christ would be the result. In Cyril’s opinion, they were both looking for a process by which to explain the Incarnation. With Nestorianism, that process is juxtaposition. With Apollinarianism, it is confusion. Neither of these is adequate, Cyril responds, because both are answers to the wrong question. Rather than looking for a technical manner to unite two vastly different things, Cyril argues that christology is concerned with the voluntary economy of the Word of God in which he chooses to live a human life in order to save fallen humanity. As far as Cyril is concerned, these are vastly different questions.

Cyril claims that Christ, though being only one individual, is both completely God and completely human. This biblical and Nicene paradox is not a contradiction for him, however. While confessing that the impassible Word of God experienced an atoning death, and that the human body of Christ was (and is) life-giving, Cyril also maintains that it was one individual who underwent all the experiences of Jesus Christ. In other words, the same person was both God of the universe and the man crucified for the redemption of humankind. This is true because Christ was none other than the Word of God who had descended to live a complete human life. The Logos had added to himself a human nature, just like that of all humanity. Whatever it means to be a human being, this is what the Word became. But he did so for a reason. His act of condescension was purposive. Behind this confession is Cyril’s allegiance to the fact that it is God who saves and humanity who needs the salvation God provides. For the Word of God to save human being he himself must suffer *as a human being*. For humankind to be saved, the Word’s assumed human life must be complete. These two axioms form the basis of Cyril’s understanding of the person of Christ.

A rereading of Cyril of Alexandria’s christology in and through his imagery, one is able to see that his christology is not a static, unification theory in which he must discover a way to glue two things together. He is not looking to describe how two things come together and result in one. Rather, Cyril begins and ends with the Word’s act of condescension on behalf of humankind. The only way for God to save humanity was to live a human life, die a human death, and be raised from the dead through his own divine power. To accomplish

this redemption, the Word became a human being; that is, he lived a genuine and complete human life. This salvific intention of the Incarnation is a fact not absent from Cyril's thinking. In fact, as we have seen, the Incarnation for Cyril is a purposive event, grounded in God's plan of redemption. The hypostatic union which he speaks of is not a technical process by which there is generated from two separate items one new thing, but is instead a purposive process in which the Word performs the otherwise impossible work of assuming for himself a human nature, adding it to his divine nature, and thereby living a human life. This makes Cyril's christology one that is internally consistent, as well as one that is consistent with Nicaea. The Alexandrian bishop was indeed a great theologian and his description and illustration of the *mysterium Christi* was greatly beneficial to the development of orthodox christology. Consequently, it is a useful pattern for one's understanding of the work of redemption performed by the Word become flesh.

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